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Issue 13

Autumn 1998

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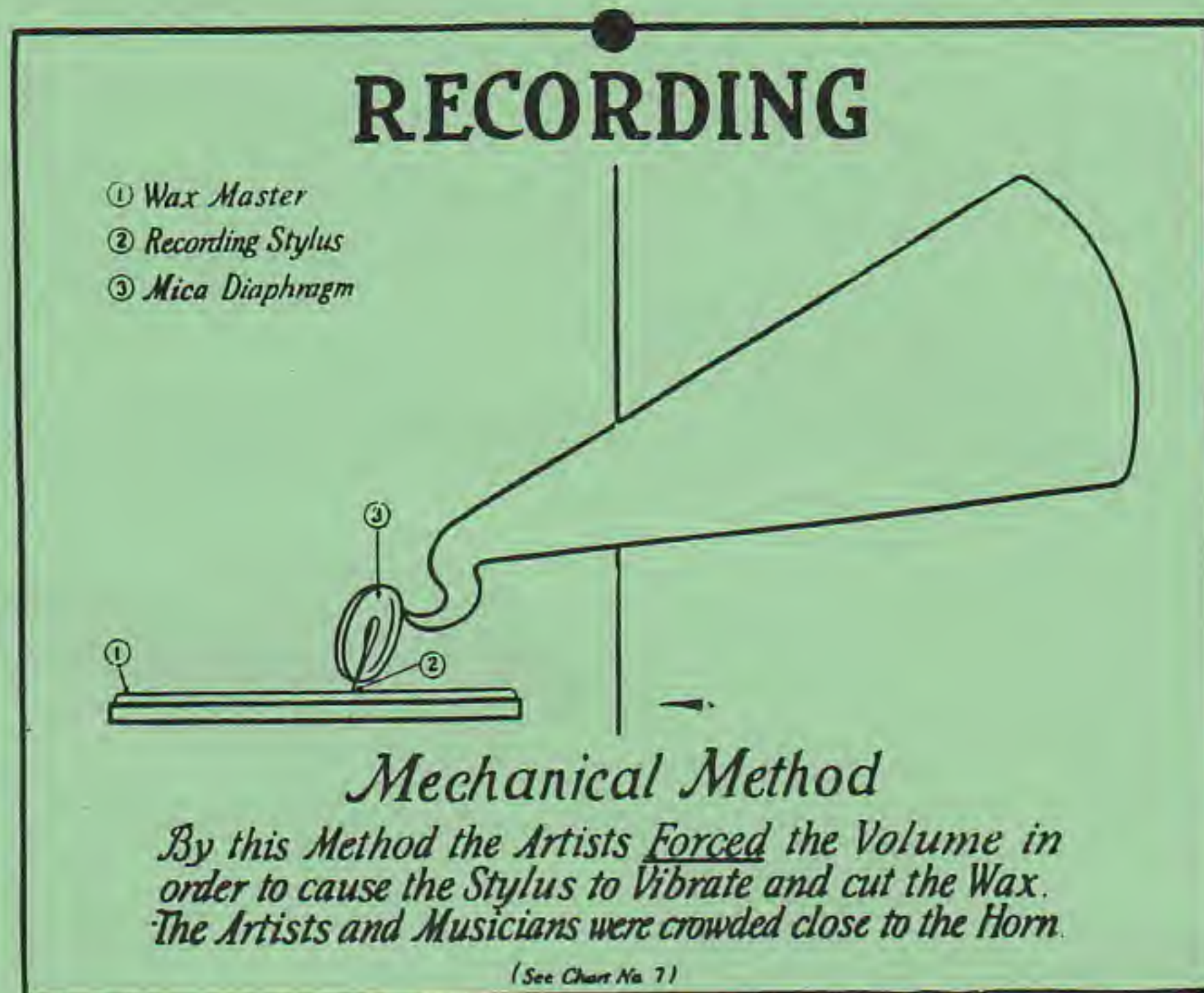
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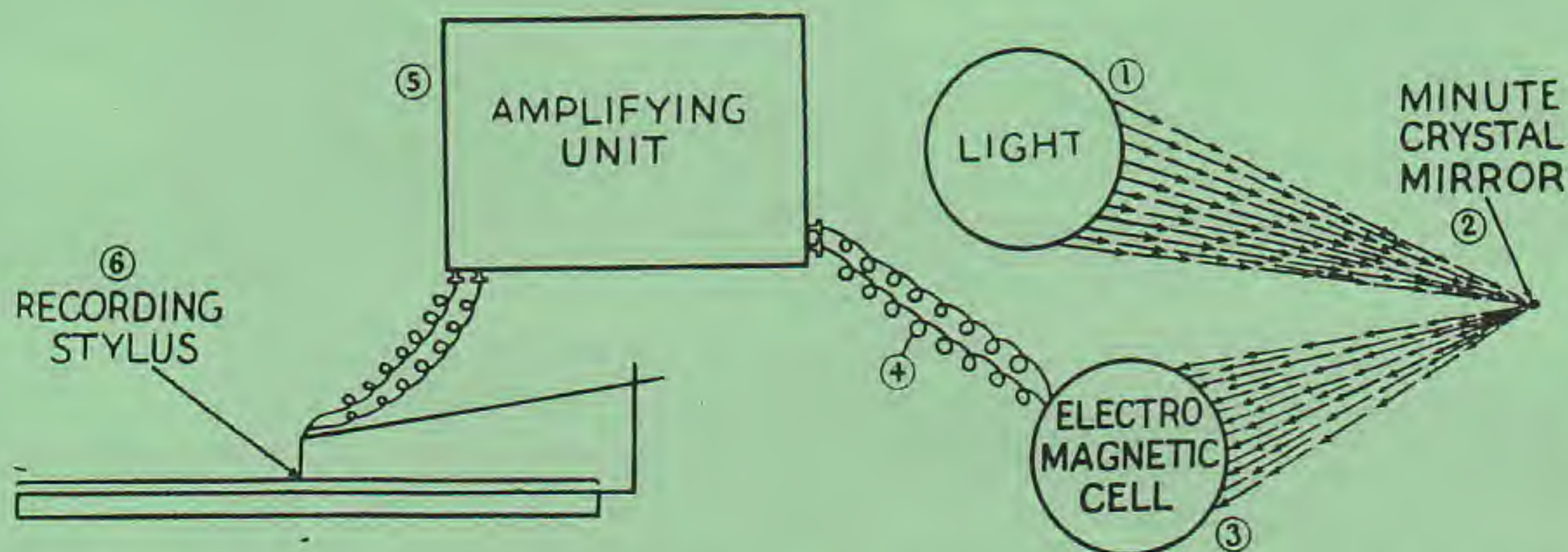
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- ⑥ The vibrations of Recording Stylus thus correspond Exactly with vibrations of the Crystal mirror.

Simplified diagram of Brunswick's Light-Ray recording system. This appeared in *Phonograph Monthly Review* in October 1926, one year after the first Light-Ray records were released.

Brunswick's "Light-Ray" and Panatrope Era--and Beyond

By R.J. Wakeman with Tim Gracyk

In early 1925 the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company was left out when Western Electric granted patent rights for its new electrical recording method to the Victor Talking Machine Company as well as the Columbia Phonograph Company. Victor began making electrical test recordings in late February 1925. Brunswick engineers, aware that such technology would give a marketing advantage to competitors, collaborated with engineers of the Radio Corporation of America, the General Electric Company, and the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company to adapt a "Light-Ray" electrical recording method for phonograph records.

As stressed in Chicago on October 2, 1925 by Brunswick Vice-President Percy L. Deutsch during the public unveiling of the Brunswick Panatrope (the first all-electric reproducing instrument for home use), Brunswick's newly adopted record-

ing process was initially developed for sound-film recording by General Electric. Deutsch's words at the unveiling ceremony are quoted on page 150 of the October 1925 issue of *Talking Machine World*: "The process of recording music is that used in the talking film, or Pallatrope, invented by Charles A. Hoxie, of the General Electric Co., which differs in details from the Phono-film of Dr. Lee DeForest." Various pieces of Brunswick promotional literature gives credit to Charles A. Hoxie (1867-1941) for developing the basic technology though Hoxie's talking film was spelled different ways—Pallotrope, Palotrope, Pallatrope, and Palatrope. During World War I, Hoxie invented the pallophotophone, which recorded sound onto film, and he then developed the photophone to convert photographed film back into sound.

During the "Light-Ray" recording process, a powerful beam of light was reflected to a photoelectric cell by a tiny crystal mirror mounted in a way so it responded to minute vibrations in sound waves. Movements of the mirror were translated into electrical energy by the photoelectric cell, then amplified by the recording equipment, and finally converted into mechanical energy for engraving a phonograph record. The basic patent for this complicated method of recording is #1,598,377.

In late 1925 Victor began to use the new term "Orthophonic," and Brunswick soon followed in using catchy names for its own electric discs. Supplements in 1926 characterized new Brunswick discs as products of "Musical Photography." Advertisements refer to "Music by Photography." The famous phrase "Light-Ray" was not used in 1925, and perhaps it was not coined until 1926. It seems that "Light-Ray" did not appear on selected Brunswick labels until early 1927. (Some copies of discs in the popular series with numbers as low as 3295 have labels that state "Light-Ray Elec. Rec." but these are probably 1927 pressings, not first-run pressings of 1926.)



Brunswick 2900 is among the lowest numbers in the popular series to feature performances cut with the "Light-Ray" system. The session was on May 21, 1925. Brunswick 2902—two numbers higher—is from an earlier session of May 16.

Perhaps the first advertisement to feature the phrase "Light-Ray" is on page 5 of the February 1926 issue of *Talking Machine World*: "Of the two new electrical recording methods, Brunswick *exclusively* has the 'Light-Ray' electrical process--the method which reproduces all vibrations of the entire musical range naturally--without exaggeration." The system was enthusiastically promoted by company representatives. Elmer C. Nelson, assistant manager of Brunswick's Boston branch, states in the October 1926 issue of *Phonograph Monthly Review*, "The light ray method is by far the most sensitive and flexible method known to science. It has enabled the recording of 30,000 children's voices singing a Mass at the time of the recent Eucharistic Congress in Chicago. It will record vibrations as low as 16 per second, and as high as 21,000 per second--any audible sound. The recording instrument used in making a record under the light ray process is called the Palatrope--Palatrope meaning 'dancing beam of light.'"

Some claims made for the "Light-Ray" process were exaggerated. The earliest discs are

especially unimpressive. Many discs of 1925, including Vocalions, produce distorted music while others of the early "Light-Ray" era feature a weak sound, as if an acoustic process had been used. Most buyers played early "Light-Ray" discs with existing acoustical mica reproducers, which made the discs sound worse than they do on equipment designed for electric discs. Brunswick's "Light-Ray" recording process never had the quality or adaptability of the Western Electric process, used by Victor and Columbia, but "Light-Ray" sound quality did improve considerably by December 1925, around the time Brunswick 3050 was made. The metallic, thin, or over-modulated recording gave way to fuller, clearer, better electrical sound.

All-Electric Panatrope--Not A "Phonograph"

For playing Brunswick's electrically recorded discs, engineers designed the Brunswick Panatrope. District Manager N.E. Branch writes in October 1926 issue of *Phonograph Monthly Review*, "The Panatrope is a new musical reproducing instrument involving new inventions and entirely new principles--it is not a phonograph or improved phonograph. The name 'Panatrope' is made up of two ancient Greek words, 'Pan and Trope'--Pan meaning all, and Trope as applied to music, meaning 'Octaves in Music.'" Brunswick promotional literature stressed that the name Panatrope "indicates that it reproduces all octaves." In a letter dated August 25, 1925 and published on page 5 of the September 1925 issue of *Talking Machine World*, Deutsch avoids the word "phonograph" and instead refers to the Panatrope as "The New Reproducing Instrument."

It ran on AC power and featured a turntable powered by an electric motor, a rugged horseshoe magnet pickup, a vacuum tube amplifier, and the first dynamic speaker to be used on home equipment (N.E. Branch calls it "the Panatrope cone"). The first Panatropes were placed on the market in a rush, and early units were not well balanced. Soon, however, the units were greatly improved and Brunswick produced a



This was cut with the "Light-Ray" process on June 5, 1925. Issued in September, it sold well.



the Panatrope to indicate that it reproduces all octaves, is a combination of radio and talking film developments with the phonograph."

The *New York Times* quotes these words of Deutsch: "This instrument is the result of heartiest cooperation between the radio and phonograph interests. It has been largely developed by radio engineers with the help of radio patents." The article states that Brunswick planned a private demonstration of the new instrument that week in New York City (it is not known if that demonstration took place). Public demonstrations were planned for October in Carnegie Hall. Vacuum tube amplification would provide volume to fill the hall.

The *Times* article describes in some detail the new sound recording method and the sound reproducing method of the new Panatrope. It also announces another development: "The grooves of the ordinary phonograph record are cut 80 to an inch, and the 12-inch record runs for approximately five minutes. So much greater delicacy is achieved in the [new electrically recorded] records that the grooves have been cut 500 to an inch and 12-inch records have been made to reproduce whole symphonies, the record lasting for forty minutes. This is regarded as a highly important development for the future enabling the music-reproducing instrument to hold its own against the competition of radio...The forty-minute record is a laboratory article at present and will not, for commercial reasons, be introduced for some time to come, according to Mr. Deutsch."

The article announced that the new electrically recorded discs were due to be issued in October (it fails to state that some had been scheduled for earlier release—for August and September). Page 58c of the August 1925 issue of *Talking Machine World* made similar announcements and also lists artists who had begun making records with the new method—pianist Leopold Godowsky, soprano Virginia Rea, contralto Elizabeth Lennox, conductor Walter B. Rogers, others. It lists "the intermezzo and prelude to the 'Cavalleria Rusticana' by the Metropolitan

Page 58c of the August 1925 issue of *Talking Machine World* identifies this as being among the first records made by the new process and scheduled for October release. Also listed is Godowsky's "Marche Militaire" on 50078 (see page 6).

line of Panatrope models with and without radio. Brunswick even produced a disc recording device for home use, called the Pallatrope.

The public was not told of new developments until August 13, 1925, when an article appeared on page 22 of the "Amusements" section of the *New York Times*. Days later, dealers learned more from page 58c of the August 15, 1925 issue of *Talking Machine World*. The *Times* article announced that a dramatic change was about to occur in recording technology: "Mr. P.L. Deutsch of Chicago, Vice President of the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company, announced here yesterday [August 12] that his company, the General Electric Company, the Radio Corporation of America and the Westinghouse Electric Company had jointly perfected a new instrument, which they assert is [a] sound-reproducing instrument which they assert is greatly superior to the phonograph and the radio in its musical range and quality. This invention, which has been named

Opera House orchestra" as being among the "first new records...which will be issued in October." This was cut on April 8, 1925, Gennaro Papi conducting. The delay in its release on Brunswick 50067—half a year—is curious. By the time it was in shops, many other electric Brunswick discs had been made available. Of course, buyers in the fall of 1925 would not have known that they were purchasing electric discs. Nothing on labels identified discs as improved products, and since most early electric discs were played on old equipment, buyers must have played them without realizing that they had been cut with a new process.

Deutsch further announced that Brunswick was experimenting with a permanent needle. The new Panatrope reproducing method was expected to cause less wear on needles and records.

Competition Between Victor and Brunswick

Brunswick's announcements must have



If we judge by duplicate copies available today, this 1926 release ranks as one of the company's best sellers. Brunswick's biggest seller of the 1920s was probably Jolson's "Sonny Boy" though a royalties statement claims it sold only 938,466 in the U.S. by 1930—not even a million copies.

alarmed Victor executives. On August 14, another article appeared in the "Amusements" section of the *New York Times* (page 14) with these headlines: "Victor Co. Produces A New Record Also" and "Officials Say Invention for Phonograph Will Revolutionize the Industry." The first paragraph states, "The Victor Talking Machine Company announced yesterday that it was soon to place on the market an improved music producing instrument which will revolutionize the entire industry." Another states, "E.R. Fenimore Johnson, President of the Victor Company, said that he was not ready to describe the invention in detail, but he called it 'the ultimate in sound reproduction.' He said that it gave complete mechanical reproduction of the entire range of audible sound. [Whereas] the new Brunswick machine...is equipped with vacuum tube amplifiers and disk resonators and is run either by batteries or by connection with an electrical system, the new Victor machine, it was said, is non-electrical."

Page 83 of the September 1925 issue of *Talking Machine World* includes an article that refers to Victor's "new instrument to be offered by that company in the near future." The word "Orthophonic" is not used. That word would be first used in the October issue of the trade journal.

The *New York Times* article of August 14 stressed that Dr. Lee De Forest, inventor of radio and the Phonofilm, believed that his patents were not infringed by Brunswick's new method: "I welcome this invention. I believe it will save the phonograph." The final paragraph states that the company would give a private demonstration of the new Panatrope at Brunswick offices at 799 Seventh Avenue at 2:30 o'clock that afternoon.

Page 58c of the August 1925 issue of *Talking Machine World* also announced Brunswick's ability to produce electrically-recorded long-play records ("to play forty minutes"). Page 156 of the September 1925 issue of the trade journal states, "Records made through the complete use of the new recording process and capable of playing steadily for a half hour or longer are now in preparation and will be placed

on the market shortly, but these will be playable only on the Panatrope." Though Brunswick never marketed a long-play record, page 55 of the April 1926 issue of *Talking Machine World* did announce that Brunswick's new electric records "play from 25 to 50 per cent longer than the ordinary records of the same type," and an advertisement in the November 1926 issue of the trade journal states that Brunswick's twelve-inch discs offer "eleven minutes of music for \$1."

Brunswick appears to have been first to demonstrate to industry insiders (as opposed to the general public) electric technology for playing discs. Page 156 of the September 1925 issue of the trade journal establishes that the Panatrope was demonstrated "at the Eastern headquarters of the company in New York City, where there was a large gathering of newspapermen and prominent members of the trade." Brunswick's advertisement of the Panatrope may have spurred Victor to advance its release of an all-electric phonograph for home use. Page 83 of the September 1925 issue of *Talking Machine World* reported an announcement by Victor executive Roy Forbes that Victor would soon market "an electric pick-up machine, which means a talking machine wherein the tone is amplified by the aid of vacuum tubes."

In early October, Brunswick representatives gave demonstrations to Brunswick dealers to prepare them for coming models; in early October, Victor representatives likewise gave demonstrations to Victor dealers. In October, both companies ran advertisements announcing that new machines would soon be on the market. Not until January 1926 would Columbia announce a new line of machines for playing electric discs though Columbia had been issuing electric discs without fanfare since mid-1925. The term "Viva-Tonal" was not used in advertising until July 1926.

The October 3, 1925 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post* featured a two-page announcement by the Victor Talking Machine Company that a new, superior phonograph would be available around November 1st. The announcement was in large black print, the only illustration being the

familiar "His Master's Voice" trademark. The October 31 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post* featured a two-page Victor advertisement in two colors introducing the new 8-tube Super-Heterodyne Victor Electrola-Radiola, which could play records acoustically or electrically. It ran on DC or AC. Although the model shown was not identified, it was the Borgia II. The advertisement also states that other models would be made available at prices ranging from \$300 to \$1,000. The November 7 issue featured a two-page advertisement of the Granada model Orthophonic Victrola—again, the model was not named. This advertisement appeared five days after November 2, 1925, which was "Victor Day," the day on which Victor formally introduced the new Orthophonic Victrola along with electrically recorded discs to the public.

The December 1925 issue of TMW states that the new Brunswick Panatrope was introduced to the New York City public on November 11th at Aeolian Hall. The Panatrope was enthusiastically received, and soon numerous presentations were made throughout the East, often first to private groups by invitation, then by public demonstrations to large audiences in auditoriums and ballrooms. Usually rooms were filled to capacity since newspaper reports had aroused interest in the new Panatrope and electrically recorded discs.

Brunswick sales executives attended a Panatrope demonstration and then traveled to all regions of the U.S. and Canada to introduce local Brunswick dealers to the Panatrope and new electrically recorded discs (page 68 of the February 1927 issue of TMW stresses that a "Brunswick Panatrope Salesmanship Course" was available to Brunswick dealers). But the announcements and demonstrations may have been premature since production was slow. It was well into 1926 before most Brunswick dealers had models for sale.

In 1925, from October to December, three revolutionary sound devices were introduced to the public: the Orthophonic Victrola, the electric Panatrope, and the Radiola 28 and Loudspeaker 104 combination (the most costly of the three).

Brunswick All-Electric Panatrope—Model P-3

I was able to examine a model P-3 Panatrope which contains the phonograph only. It has a beautiful walnut console cabinet. The gold medallion merely states "Panatrope." The speaker is located at the center front of the cabinet with storage space on the sides. This is an early model, with the tone arm consisting of the larger end of the older Ultona tone arm connected to a smaller "goose-neck" portion which holds the horseshoe magnet pickup. The tone arm and metal housing for the horseshoe magnet pickup are gold plated, but the housing is not ornamented and contains no printed or engraved writing. It is designed to play only lateral-cut 78 rpm records.

The turntable, motor, and tone arm are in the cabinet's center. Near the turntable at the back is a large volume control knob. The single lid has dual spring-loaded lid supports. The decal is located behind the tone arm at the back of the cab-



The Godowsky and Danise discs shown on this page were among Brunswick's first electrics. Over a year would pass before some labels would refer to the "Light-Ray" recording system.



inet and is the same as the earlier forms: "Brunswick" in large gold script, with "The Brunswick-Balke-Collender Co." in small print beneath. The 12-inch turntable has a green felt covering. When the turntable is lifted from the spindle, the usual black metal motor board is visible. The top of the black metal motor board has a large decal in the shape of a shield. On it are listed patent numbers and dates. The motor board also contains the usual two collapsible ring pulls for lifting the motor works. The A.C. motor appears to be of the induction disc type. The electronic amplifier held within the cabinet is not readily visible. The grille over the speaker is not designed to lift up and out, and no door protects the grille. The magnetic pickup is good but the unit's sound reproduction is poor since the amplifier is weak.

Restoring the electronics of such a unit is not easy. Often transformers, capacitors, and tubes need to be replaced. Transformers can be expensive. An unrestored horseshoe magnet pick-up needs to be serviced. The speaker is sometimes found in a frozen state. The field coil may be broken or burned. The voice coil may no longer be centered. The leather around the cone is often dried, cracked, and stiff. However, a restored Panatrope can have excellent sound reproduction.

Panatrope's Introduction Recalled By Dealer

David Urner, a Brunswick dealer in the 1920s in Bakersfield, California, recalled the introduction of the Panatrope during a 1980 interview with Ron Dethlefsen, published in *Antique Phonograph Monthly* (Vol. VI, No. 4). Urner states that in late 1925 the Brunswick company invited him and other Southern California dealers to the ballroom of the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles for a special dinner. Isham Jones and His Orchestra provided live entertainment, and Urner recalled that after the musicians played the song "Collegiate," they set their instruments down and an electrically cut version of "Collegiate" was played on an all-electric Panatrope hidden behind a screen. Urner states, "We heard that same music, with volume quite similar, no distortion, plenty of bass...everybody was amazed."

Though impressed with the new sound, the dealers were also disappointed that high prices would be charged for the new units—" \$600.00 and up, depending on the cabinet," Urner reported. Despite the high selling prices, he recalled that units sold well, especially for use in public places, including hotels, roadhouses, restaurants, ice cream shops, barbershops, and schools.

Isham Jones and His Orchestra never made a commercial record of "Collegiate." Urner's recollection suggests that a special demonstration record of the tune was made, but it is also possible that they heard the Carl Fenton's Orchestra record of "Collegiate" (Brunswick 2913), cut with a vocal refrain on June 5. Jones leads his orchestra for "Sweet Georgia Brown" on the reverse side of this disc that sold well in late 1925.

The First Electric Brunswick Discs

According to researcher Ross Laird, who is compiling for Greenwood Press a discography of all U.S. Brunswick records, the company seems to have experimented with electric recording throughout April and early May, 1925, some sessions using the electrical process, others using the old

acoustic process. Laird reports that the earliest electric records were cut on April 7, 1925, but these went unissued. As mentioned earlier, Brunswick's earliest electric record to be issued eventually was "Prelude—Cavalleria Rusticana," cut on April 8 by the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and issued on Brunswick 50067. It was not issued until October, months after the company had issued other electric records. Laird reports that the first electric recording in the popular series was Brunswick 2881, cut on April 15 and featuring Brunswick Hour Orchestra performances. The "Advance Record Bulletins" in the June 1925 issue of *Talking Machine World* establishes that 2881 was issued in July and notes, "Under Direction of Walter Haenschen," who was better known to record buyers as Carl Fenton.

Brunswick 2900 is the next lowest catalog number for a disc in the popular series featuring performances cut with the electric process. Issued



Brunswick added "Light-Ray Elec. Rec." to labels in 1927, mostly between 3350 and 3650. Note the use of abbreviation. Rarely did "Light-Ray Electrical Recording" appear on labels. Brunswick 3295 had been issued in the autumn of 1926. Since the above has a label that refers to the "Light-Ray" process, it may be a 1927 pressing.

in August 1925, this is from Vernon Dalhart's first Brunswick session, which took place on May 21. Two other electric performances from Dalhart's session were issued on Brunswick 2911.

Electrically cut performances by the Regent Club Orchestra on Brunswick 2902 are from an earlier session than Dalhart's and have earlier matrix numbers. The Regent performances were cut on May 16, 1925. Brian Rust's *American Dance Band Discography* gives no "E" before the matrix numbers for the Regent Club Orchestra recordings of May 16 (Brunswick normally used an "E" as a prefix for electric recordings) but aural evidence establishes that Brunswick 2902 features electrically cut performances. The lowest matrix number from that May 16 session is 15733, and most Brunswick recordings with matrix numbers above 15733 are electric (early Brunswick releases indicate matrix numbers in the shellac, but from the mid-1920s until late 1931—around the time 6205 was issued—matrix information was left off records). Exceptions include some made by portable equipment in Los Angeles. Electric equip-

ment for Brunswick sessions on the West Coast would not be available for another two years. When a Los Angeles studio was established in late 1927, electric recording equipment was set up and the LAE matrix series was introduced. Laird reports that Brunswick's earliest issued Los Angeles electric recordings were on Vocalion 15641, featuring Sonny Clay's Orchestra. Brian Rust's *Jazz Records 1897-1942* gives January 12, 1928 as the date for that session.

Evidence of experimentation is found in Rust's *American Dance Band Discography 1917-1942*. "Ida-I Do" was recorded acoustically and electrically. An "E" (meaning "electric") is before the matrix number for the song as cut by Isham Jones Orchestra on May 16, 1925. The orchestra had cut this song four days earlier, and no "E" is before matrix numbers (15716/9) for that session. Acoustic takes were rejected, electric ones issued.

Page 58c of the August 1925 issue of *Talking Machine World* lists records made by the new process and scheduled for October release—for example, "Ben Bolt" and "Robin Adair" as sung by



In 1927, labels on some releases in the popular series stated "Light-Ray Elec. Rec." Note here differences in labels for a record issued on August 11, 1927—including a difference in the Spanish translation. The label that states "Violin Solo With Orchestra" is wrong since the performance features piano accompaniment. Brunswick's two pressing plants evidently created their own labels.

Elizabeth Lennox on Brunswick 2929—and this is the closest the company came to identifying for the general public its earliest electric recordings. But many electric records with lower catalog numbers were issued in August and September. In contrast to Victor's early electric discs with a "VE" in an oval pressed into the shellac near the label, Brunswick's early electric discs have nothing to indicate that they were made with an electric recording process—no clues are on Brunswick labels of late 1925, and nothing is pressed in the shellac itself. The one way to identify which Brunswick records of this transitional period were electrically cut is to play them. Even that is not wholly reliable for determining which performances were electrically cut since not all "Light-Ray" recordings have the full sound that listeners expect from electric recordings.

For a time Brunswick staggered the recording and release dates with acoustically recorded discs. Some records were even released with an acoustic recording on one side and a "Light-Ray" recording on the other side.

The Year 1926

By the mid-1920s the Brunswick company and its subsidiaries claimed to have nearly 5,000 employees. Brunswick production plants had a combined floor space of 2,123,200 square feet. Brunswick owned hardwood timber lands and a saw and planing mill at Ewen, Michigan. In Tennessee Brunswick owned a mill at Beech Fork and a veneer and panel plant at Knoxville.

Page 18 of the April 1926 issue of *Talking Machine World* states that Brunswick reported a net loss for its phonograph division of \$750,512 for the year ending December 31, 1925. This compares with a net profit of \$2,801,723 for 1924. A statement to stockholders explained that the inability to produce large quantities of Panatrope, along with numerous technical problems, caused the company to be deprived of much of its business during the second half of 1925.

However, Brunswick enjoyed strong sales

in 1926. The first page of the April 1927 issue of *Talking Machine World* reports that the company showed a net profit of \$2,553,809 for 1926, with sales amounting to \$29,017,124.

While Brunswick never did produce the projected 20-minute playing records, it did develop and produce records that would play 20 to 50 percent longer than ordinary records. In April 1926 the first two were announced in TMW: the "Marche Slave," played by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Wilhelm Mengelberg and "Merrymakers' Carnival" by the Merrymakers, a male vocal ensemble that used the name Revelers when making Victor records and the name Singing Sophomores when working for Columbia.

The cover of the January, 1926 issue of *Talking Machine World* advertised the new Brunswick Panatrope with these words: "NOW—the Complete Musical Scale—by Electricity..."

The January 1926 issue of TMW features an article about Brunswick's elaborate sales and publicity campaign for the new Panatrope as well as "Light-Ray" records. It was designed to arouse public interest and "to impart to the dealer and his sales staff a knowledge of the Panatrope so that the demonstration of the instrument will be made in a manner fitting its merits and capabilities." Two booklets were prepared for use by Brunswick sales personnel. One stressed how the Panatrope was more advanced than older models of phonographs and how it synchronized electrical recording with electrical reproduction. The second booklet explained how a salesman could best demonstrate the instrument. Promotional materials were also being prepared which could be advertised and distributed by dealers. A booklet for window displays was also planned.

The February 1926 issue of TMW announced Brunswick's plans to produce several Panatrope models, including one costing less than \$100. Brunswick referred to these as "a line of musical reproducing instruments." The April issue presents six of the P-3 Panatrope units housed in the earlier Radiola cabinets, including the Beaux

Arts, Chippendale, Georgian, Gotham, Oxford, and Stratford cabinet designs.

Arturo Toscanini was so impressed upon hearing a Panatrope on or slightly before January 14, 1926—the date of his first appearance at Carnegie Hall as guest conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra—that he agreed to record for Brunswick. This is noteworthy since the famous maestro otherwise made commercial records in America only for the Victor Talking Machine Company and its successor, RCA-Victor. His one Brunswick session was in February 1926 in the Chapter Room of Carnegie Hall.

He was introduced to the new Brunswick technology because Ottorino Respighi's "Pini di Roma," or "Pines of Rome," requires a record of a nightingale's song to be played against a light accompaniment of strings and harp. To reproduce the nightingale record at sufficient volume, the New York Philharmonic had acquired a Brunswick

Panatrope. Page 28 of the April 1926 issue of *Talking Machine World* reports these words of William A. Brophy, director of Brunswick's recording laboratory: "The success which attended the performance of the instrument awakened in Mr. Toscanini the great possibilities which the Brunswick Panatrope had in influencing the future development of music....A visit to our laboratory gave Mr. Toscanini the opportunity of seeing and hearing a practical demonstration of the exclusive recording process now used by the Brunswick company. He was so impressed with the method and results of the process that he expressed a desire to make records."

Toscanini's enthusiasm waned, and only a twelve-inch record resulted from his association with Brunswick: the Nocturne and Scherzo from Mendelssohn's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" on Brunswick 50074. When the record was released it was well received and reviewed, but when the New York Philharmonic Orchestra again recorded for Brunswick, it was conducted by someone else.

In December 1926 the company entered into contract with Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft (DGG) for the interchange of record matrices, rights to manufacturing patents, and plans of operation. This enabled Brunswick to place on the American market within a year outstanding performances cut in Europe, including works conducted by Wilhelm Furtwangler and Richard Strauss. Such works were issued in Germany on discs bearing the "His Master's Voice" trademark, but DGG used the label name Polydor for exports. Some American shops already imported Polydor discs, and a few continued even after Brunswick became associated with DGG. Brunswick discs of the late 1920s made from DGG matrices do not use the term Polydor but instead state "Recorded in Europe." L.L. Sebok, formerly with Columbia, began supervising Brunswick's foreign record division in January 1927. Brunswick records were given wider distribution abroad since Deutsche Grammophon, headquartered in Berlin, established a Brunswick label. Many alternate takes cut in the U.S. for Brunswick and even Vocalion were sold in



Cut in August and issued in November 1927, this is among the last discs with a label saying "Light-Ray Elec. Rec." For a few years the talented Frank Black was musical arranger for the Revelers, known as the Merrymakers on Brunswick discs. He made Ampico piano rolls in the 1920s and later conducted for other record companies.

Germany on this Brunswick label, including King Oliver recordings. Later in the 1920s Brunswick in the U.S. made records—often without vocal refrain—specifically for issue in Germany.

Brunswick issued over 300 electrically-cut records in its popular series before indicating on some labels that a "Light-Ray" system was being used. For much of 1927 labels stated "Light-Ray Elec. Rec." (note the abbreviations), beginning around the middle 3300s although, as stated earlier, copies of records as early as 3295—originally issued in late 1926—also have the phrase (again, such copies are probably late pressings). "Light-Ray Electrical Recording" is found on a few labels—that is, no abbreviations are used.

In the popular series between record numbers 3350 and 3684, some Brunswick labels state "Light-Ray" while others do not. Two typefaces are found on labels in this period, which suggests that Brunswick's two pressing plants were responsible for their own labels. "Light-Ray Elec. Rec." may be found on labels of both typefaces though it is most often found on labels that appear to be from the company's Los Angeles plant. In late 1927, around the time 3684 was issued, that phrase was used for the last time.

Executive Jack Kapp (1901-1949)

On March 10, 1926, a young Jack Kapp was added to the list of Brunswick executives, and with each passing year his responsibilities increased. Kapp's close ties with artists who made Brunswick records had important repercussions after his employment as a Brunswick executive ended. When Kapp headed in 1934 a new American record company, Decca Records (an American branch of England's Decca Record Company, Ltd.), he convinced such artists as Bing Crosby, the Mills Brothers, Glen Gray, and Guy Lombardo to switch from making Brunswick records to making Decca records.

Kapp had worked for Columbia for 11 years, starting as an errand boy around 1915 when he was only 14. He gained considerable experi-

ence in the Mid-West, especially Chicago, working with dealers and recording artists. Kapp finally used that experience to secure talent to make new records and to promote their sales. Before joining Brunswick, Kapp managed the record department of the Chicago branch of the Columbia Phonograph Company. Tom Rockwell succeeded him, according to page 134 of the November 1925 issue of *Talking Machine World*. By 1931 Rockwell worked for Brunswick under Kapp.

When he joined Brunswick, the company created a race record division to be headed by Kapp. Having acquired the record division of the Aeolian Company, Brunswick announced to the trade on December 1, 1924 that Vocalion records would thereafter be issued by a company division independent of the division issuing Brunswick discs. This took effect on January 2, 1925. A new Vocalion matrix series was started.

The new line of Vocalion race records was announced to the trade on page 84 of the May 1926 issue of *Talking Machine World*, which stated, "This is a field in which the Brunswick Co. has not entered into very extensively before this...There will be weekly advertisements in the *Defender*, which is the largest paper in America devoted to the colored race...The big feature on the first list of race records is 'King Oliver's Jazz Band.' Possibly no other colored artist has the reputation and popularity with colored people that



In June 1926, parent company Brunswick began a Vocalion race series supervised by the young Jack Kapp (1901-1949), who later headed Decca.

King Oliver's Jazz Band enjoys."

A numbering system starting at 1000 was used, and the slogan for the new series—"Better and Cleaner Race Records"—indirectly criticized the race records issued by competing companies. Page 103 of the June 1926 issue of TMW states, "In issuing the race records the Brunswick company stated that the main purpose of its plan is to give to the colored people records made by artists of their own race which are absolutely above reproach insofar as the theme and manner of presentation are concerned."

Talking Machine World reported regularly on Kapp. Page 94 of the February 1928 issue calls him "one of the most enthusiastic and energetic young executives in the business to-day" and states that Kapp was "in complete charge of the sales and recording of Vocalion records" (emphasis added), which meant a promotion from his position as supervisor only of race records. The article listed Kapp's proposed changes for Vocalion records: "Vocalion records will be merchandised in specific classes...he will separate the race records, the old-time tunes and the popular records into individual classes....Mr. Kapp is also developing new talent for the Vocalion catalog, among them...Elmo Tanner and Dick Powell..." The article credits Kapp for discovering blues artist Jim Jackson, whose record titled "Jim Jackson's Kansas City Blues" on Vocalion 1144 sold well, and for recruiting Red Nichols to the Brunswick roster.

It also credited him for making an obscure song into a hit: "He is responsible for the enormous popularity of 'Someday Sweetheart,' which he discovered and arranged, after the tune had been definitely consigned to the scrap heap." On Vocalion 1059, King Oliver and His Dixie Syncopators enjoyed success with the song, which was credited to composers John and Benjamin Spikes (Jelly Roll Morton later claimed that he wrote the song and sold it to the Spikes). Cut on November 9, 1926, presumably under Kapp's supervision, this was probably the best-selling disc of Oliver's career. In August 1934, Kapp arranged for Bing Crosby to cut "Someday, Sweetheart" during Cros-



Panatropo-Radiola 128C

The Panatropo-Radiola 128C (above) and 148C (next page) were first marketed in October 1926.

by's first session for the new Decca label, and it was issued on Decca 101.

Page 110 of the December 1928 issue includes an article headlined, "Jack Kapp Uses Portable Labs. in Recording Work." Identifying Kapp as "head of the Chicago recording laboratories of the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Co.," the article states that Kapp made "a large number of very excellent recordings for the 'Hill-Billy' section of the Vocalion record catalog," using portable equipment "on a recent tour of the South."

Page 94 of the February 1928 issue states, "In contrast to Brunswick's method of distributing records through branches, Vocalion will be handled exclusively through jobbers." Among the first releases in Vocalion's new race series were "Snag It" and "Too Bad" by King Oliver and His Dixie Syncopators, who were playing nightly at the Plantation Cafe in Chicago. Oliver's Vocalion discs were the first of Oliver's to be electrically cut. Also released were "Panama Limited Blues" and "Tia Juana Man" by Ada Brown, and "Georgia Man" and "What a Man" by Teddy Peters.

By the early 1930s Jack Kapp was managing director of the Brunswick Recording Laboratories.

The Acoustic Panatrope

In 1926 Brunswick produced its own acoustic phonograph designed to play electrically recorded discs. According to page 1 of the April 1926 issue of *Talking Machine World*, a sample of the first model—"a Console style of unusually attractive cabinet design, embodying new and improved reproducing features, to retail at \$115"—was shipped to some Brunswick dealers on April 15. This consolette would eventually be called the Seville. TMW announced that the consolette would be followed by a console model with a retail price of \$160 (in fact, two console styles would appear—the Madrid, priced at \$165, and the Valencia, priced at \$225) and then a "De Luxe style of cabinet...to retail at a higher price." This De Luxe model would be called the Cortez when finally available, and it sold for \$300. Machines for buyers who placed orders would be delivered as soon as a month after dealers received each sample. (As for De Luxe styles of the all-electric Panatrope, page 5 of the April 1926 issue of *Talking Machine World* gives illustrations of these models: the Georgian, Oxford, Beaux Arts, Gotham, Chippendale, and Stratford.)

Brunswick did not consider it necessary to use the re-entrant horns found in Victor's Orthophonic Credenza but early advertisements stated that these Brunswick phonographs were of the exponential type. The newly designed mechanical reproducer was similar to the Victor Orthophonic reproducer, with some notable differences. The Brunswick reproducer had a pot metal backplate but the main housing was zinc or brass and was heavier than the Orthophonic. The Brunswick aluminum diaphragm was also heavier and did not have the spider attachment.

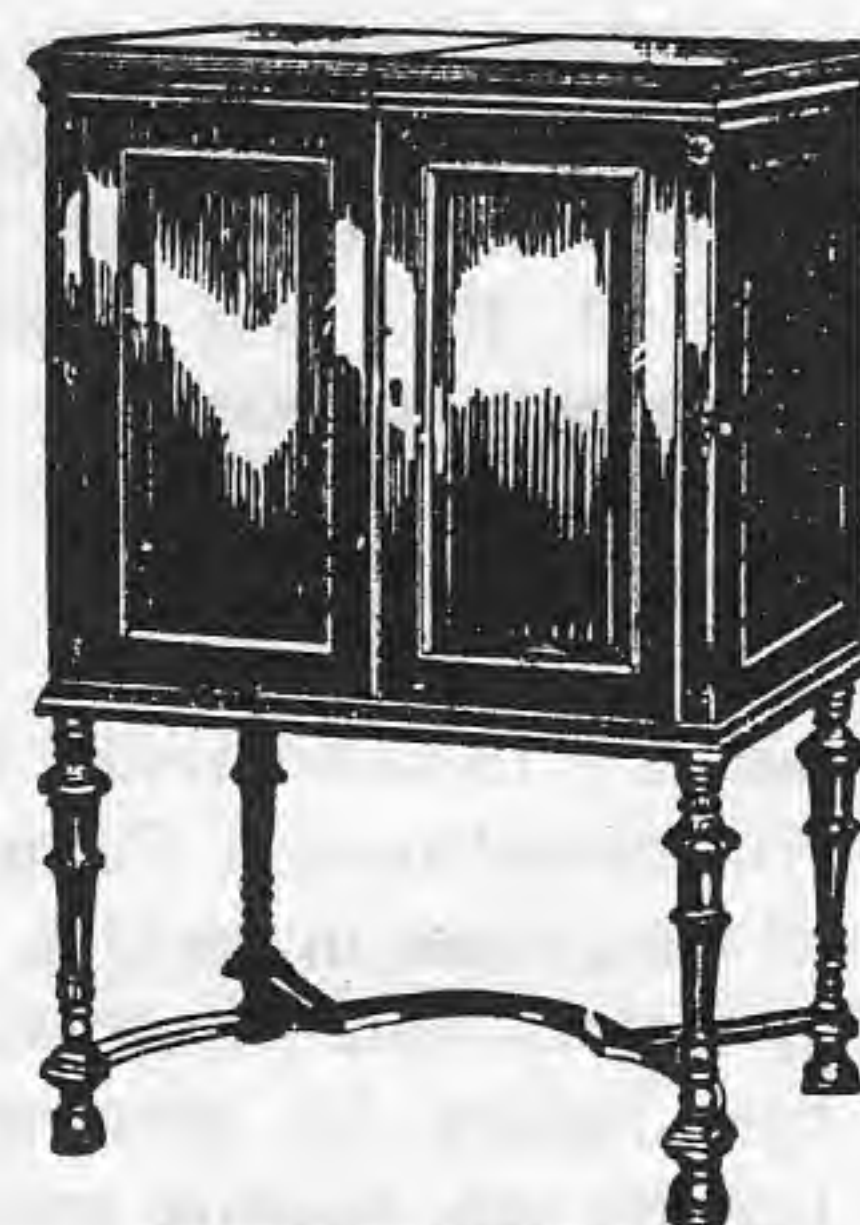
To help gain publicity for the new acoustic Panatrope, Brunswick offered prizes to individuals who could provide the best names and slogans for the "new musical instrument." The first prize of \$3000 was awarded in March 1927 to one Mildred A. Bux of Melrose Park, Pennsylvania. The name she submitted was the "Prismatone," her

suggested slogan being "The instrument of colorful music." The second prize, \$1500 was awarded to Mrs. Herman Arky of Nashville. The name she suggested was "The Brunswick Philharmonic." The third prize of \$500 went to P.L. Dickerson of the U.S. Coast Guard. His suggested name was "The Brunswick Synchronomatic." Page 128 of the April 1927 issue of *Talking Machine World* features photographs of the contest winners.

For a few months beginning in May 1927, advertising used the new "Prismatone" name and "Instrument of Colorful Music" slogan. An advertisement on page 5 of the May 1927 issue of *Talking Machine World* presents three Prismatone models: the Madrid (a console model), the Cortez (a larger model than the Madrid), and the Cordova (a combination Prismatone and Radiola). By July 1927 Brunswick stopped using the new slogan and name Prismatone. The company instead referred to each acoustic model as "the Brunswick Panatrope, Exponential Type."

"Cortez" Model Brunswick Acoustic Panatrope

I have closely examined the Cortez model Panatrope (or "Prismatone") that I own. It is about the same size and shape as Victor's Orthophonic Credenza. The slightly overhanging lid measures



Panatrope-Radiola 148C

22 1/2 inches deep and 29 1/2 inches wide while the cabinet is 43 inches tall. The cabinet is finely crafted of light stained walnut veneer. The lid is held open by two spring-loaded lid supports. The tone arm, reproducer, and other hardware are gold plated. The decal is located on the back panel behind the tone arm and is the usual "Brunswick" in gold script, but below in tiny print are these words: "MADE IN USA PAT OFF AND CANADA MARCA REGTRDA MARCA IND REGTRDA No.2184813 FEB 1923."

The tone arm is fully supported at the base by a metal ring, which permits free horizontal movement. The tone arm has a curved and continually tapered shape and it is larger and heavier than the Victor tone arms. The base of the large end of the tone arm has the usual metal sleeve extending into the short wood tube leading to the horn. The reproducer has "Brunswick" stamped into the filigree pattern on the outside of the housing. The reproducer has a thin aluminum diaphragm. Near the turntable at the front of the motor board frame is the traditional Brunswick gold plated medallion. It states "Cortez" and gives a serial number. The cabinet contains an internal oval horn measuring 17 3/4 inches wide by 21 inches tall at the open end, but the shape is not exponential. The horn is made of the usual molded 3/16 inch thick wood with a light finish. This horn is attractive but is hidden behind a large cloth covered grille. The sound quality of the Cortez is excellent and with a Waltrip Laboratory-restored reproducer attains about 90% of the sound quality of the best restored Victor Orthophonic Credenza models.

Additional Developments of 1926

In February 1926 Brunswick had licensed the British Thomson-Houston Company Ltd. to make and sell Panatropes in the U.K. In April the first Light Ray records were advertised in the U.K. In July a new factory for pressing Brunswick records in London was nearing completion. In September, British Brunswick Ltd. was registered as


a private company; W. Sinkler Darby was appointed Managing Director. British Brunswick Ltd. had a ten-year contract to manufacture and sell Brunswick records and Panatropes, taking over the contract from the Thomson-Houston Company.

In April 1926 Vincent Lopez signed a contract to record exclusively for Brunswick. At this time Lopez and His Orchestra were playing nightly at the Casa de Lopez, 247 West 54th Street in New York City. The host of his own radio program, Lopez had become well-known for his broadcast introduction, "Lopez Speaking." He used this for introductions on some records. An example is on one side of Brunswick 3368: "Lopez Speaking. Thanks to Irving Berlin, 'I'm On My Way Home.'" The performance was recorded in New York City on December 6, 1926.

B R U N S W I C K

Topics

COMMENTS
NE
PICTURES



El Tango Del
Gaucho
(The Gaucho's Tango)

Published Monthly by

Dealer's Name
and Address Here

In November 1926 Brunswick produced the first issue of its "Brunswick Topics" house organ, prepared by the company's publicity department.

In October 1926 Brunswick announced to the trade via *Talking Machine World* the first Panatrope-Radiola combination models, the 128C and the 148C. The models, which used standard AC current, featured the Radiola Super-Heterodyne with eight tubes.

In November 1926, Brunswick produced the first issue of its house organ called "Brunswick Topics," which was prepared by the company's publicity department. In addition to listing current record releases and the latest Panatrope models, it featured articles on the use of Panatrope models by noted personalities, such as boxer Jack Dempsey. Four permanent features were planned for each issue. "On the Air" was a column describing the activities of Brunswick artists in radio broadcasts; "Light Rays" was devoted to interviews with and news about artists; "The Letter Box" gave news of Brunswick products; and "Music Makers of Melody Lane" described those who wrote the words and music for the popular songs of the day.

The house organ was initially edited by H. Emerson Yorke, who was manager of Brunswick's publicity department until April 1927. He was then transferred to the company's New York studio to work as an A & R man.

The Year 1927

In February 1927 the company marketed a new portable known as the Brunswick Parisian-Portable. This eight-pound machine had a cone-shaped diaphragm, called an "oscillator," which folded into the lid of the case and, according to page 102 of the February 1927 issue of TMW, made "a horn or tone arm unnecessary." A separate non-folding oscillator was available for home use. Two models were made, one with a leatherette case for \$15, the other a figured metal of dark mottled grey for \$10. Both models were less than a foot square and only 2 1/4 inches thick. (Introduced in May 1928 was the new \$25 Brunswick suitcase portable phonograph. It featured an unusually large internal horn and had good sound reproduction. In February 1929 a

new portable Brunswick Panatrope model retailing for \$35 was announced in TMW. It had a metal case with padded coverings of tan leatherette, and inside the lid is space for carrying records.)

The 1927 Brunswick records catalogue presents a description of the "Light Ray" electrical recording process. New to the 220 page catalogue were Franklyn Baur, Vernon Dalhart, Esther Walker, and Wendell Hall. Also listed were Harry Archer and His Orchestra, Frank Black and His Orchestra, Jack Denny and His Orchestra, The Clevelanders, Ernie Golden and His Hotel McAlpin Orchestra, Hal Kemp and His Orchestra, Victor Arden-Phil Ohman and Their Orchestra, Vincent Lopez and His Casa Lopez Orchestra, the Merrymakers, Ben Selvin and His Orchestra, A. and P. Gypsies (a string orchestra of seven instruments), Ben Bernie and His Hotel Roosevelt Orchestra, Harold Leonard and His Waldorf-Astoria



Cut on October 11, 1927. The composers were Meskill, Conrad, and Sherman. Beginning around 3520, labels stopped citing composers. Around 3720 Brunswick resumed the practice of citing composers though some later discs lack credits, such as Brunswick 4000 (see page 18).

Orchestra, Charley Straight and His Orchestra, and The Six Jumping Jacks (led by Harry Reser). New to the "Hall of Fame" series were tenor Lauritz Melchior; contralto Marie Morrissey; and the New York Philharmonic led by Wilhelm Mengelberg.

Although Brunswick recorded such vaudeville blues singers as Lena Wilson and Rosa Henderson in 1923 and 1924, it did not have a race series until March 1927. Special numbers were assigned to these records--the 7000 series--and discs featured labels with lightning "flashes" on each side of the Brunswick shield. Most records in this series were blues vocals.

Discs of country and folk music were issued in a new "Dixie" series, beginning with Vernon Dalhart records, and labels of these discs also feature the distinctive lightning bolts design. The new series began with Brunswick 100, issued in April 1927. The Dalhart numbers on Brunswick 100 had originally been issued months earlier in Brunswick's regular popular series, on Brunswick 3469. Within two years, around 300 discs would

be issued in the "Dixie" series.

According to page 98a of the October 1927 issue of TMW, the first six sets of the "New Hall of Fame Symphony Series" were released. Album No. 1 featured Richard Strauss conducting his own *Ein Heldenleben*, the first time a recording of that work was available in America.

The May 1927 issue of TMW reported that the Brunswick Panatrope met with favor among England's royal family. King George V had a Panatrope, the Duke of York owned two models, and the popular Prince of Wales had three. The Prince reportedly introduced his family members to its new sound reproducing abilities.

From the beginning in the early 1920s, Brunswick issued records by various artists who recorded for no other company, and throughout the decade Brunswick released discs of artists who were new to the record-buying public. Some of the most unusual records listed in the 1927 catalogue were made by Harry M. Snodgrass, who became famous while serving time at the state prison at Jefferson City, Missouri. He had been sentenced to three years for assault with intent to rob although one report indicates he was sentenced as an accomplice to a murder. In prison he played piano with a jazz or dance band consisting of inmates, and at a set time each week the band was broadcast over radio station WOS. The broadcasts were popular and Snodgrass became such a celebrity that telegrams, mail, and gifts were sent to the young piano player.

Snodgrass was discharged on January 16, 1925. Within a month he was working at station WOS in Jefferson City, and a recording session in Brunswick's Chicago studio soon followed. The records are unusual in that most feature a spoken introduction by J.M. Witten of the Jefferson City station. Labels even call attention to Witten. After identifying Snodgrass as "King of the Ivories," the label for Brunswick 3138 states, "J.M. Witten Announcing." The 1927 catalogue lists ten sides by Snodgrass. He composed a number of waltzes, including "Along Miami Shore" and "The Moonlight, A Waltz and You." He wrote a "radio"



Records of country and folk music were issued in a special "Dixie" series. It began with Brunswick 100, a Vernon Dalhart disc issued in April 1927.



Brunswick discs stopped having "A" and "B" side designations around the time this record was issued in 1928. Labels for what could be considered "B" sides instead have a line beneath catalog numbers. Some early issues done in this fashion also have parenthesis. Lines were eliminated from labels around 1936, and these ARC Brunswick discs became, like Columbia's, "sideless."

hit ("On The Air"), cut 10 piano rolls for QRS, and performed on the Orpheum Circuit for a few years.

By the end of 1927 Brunswick owned 45,000 acres of land in Marquette Co., Michigan, contiguous to its own railroad of about 40 miles of main line and branches. On this land 26,000 acres carried virgin hardwood, pine, and hemlock, estimated at 210,000,000 feet of merchantable timber. The plant located at Big Bay, Michigan, was now called the Lake Independence Lumber Company. Brunswick established a subsidiary in Brazil (Companhia Brunswick de Brasil).

An exact date for the change-over in American studios is not known, but by late August 1927 Brunswick adopted the superior Western Electric microphone method. By September 1927 Brunswick advertisements in *Talking Machine World* no longer mentioned Light-Ray records.

Despite technical advances and a remarkable roster of artists, Brunswick record sales dropped in 1927 to \$27 million.

Sonora Expansion Robs Brunswick of Key Men

In 1926 many prominent business and financial leaders entered the rapidly expanding radio market. This included major stockholders in the Bidhamson Company, a patent holding corporation. The Bidhamson Company and the Premier Laboratories—a research and scientific organization which held vital patents in radio, electric recording, and loud speakers—combined to form the Acoustics Products Company, Inc., which then purchased controlling interest in the Sonora Phonograph Company. This was done through exchanges of stock, share for share, common and preferred. All stock exchanges were in-house. With this investment of capital, Sonora was no longer a small company struggling for survival but was instead a leader in the phonograph and radio industry with an active research and development program as well as aggressive sales promotions.

Under the Sonora name, Acoustics Products planned many new projects. Expanded research into new products was placed under the charge of Dr. Miller Hutchinson, who had led the Premier Laboratories and was an authority on acoustical engineering. Earlier he had been chief engineer of Thomas A. Edison, Inc.

Acoustic Products hired three Brunswick executives. In June 1927, *Talking Machine World* reported that Percy L. Deutsch, a grandson of company founder J.M. Brunswick, had resigned as vice-president and director for the Brunswick company. He was in large measure responsible for the success of Brunswick phonographs and records. In October, the trade journal announced Deutsch as the new president of the Acoustic Products Company and the Sonora Phonograph Company. Deutsch brought with him A.J. Kendrick, who had for years been General Sales Manager of the music division of the Brunswick company. Kendrick was appointed General Sales

Manager of the Sonora Phonograph Company.

Walter G. Haenschen, who had supervised sessions from the beginning of Brunswick's entry in 1919-20 into the American disc market (sessions had been held by late 1916 for the Canadian disc market but it is not known who supervised these New York City sessions) and had led the Carl Fenton Orchestra, was hired as Recording Director of new Sonora recording laboratories in New York City. Deutsch announced plans to produce a Sonora record and to improve electrical reproducing instruments for both home and auditorium use. In 1928 and 1929 Sonora placed impressive advertisements in magazines and newspapers to promote new phonograph and radio models, but nothing came of announced plans to issue Sonora records, and Haenschen soon worked for a prominent transcription company, World.



Richard Voynow was Jack Kapp's assistant in Chicago in the late 1920s and by the early 1930s was in charge of the Chicago studio. He revived the name Wolverines for some sessions (the Wolverines—with Voynow and Bix Beiderbecke, among others—made Gennett discs in 1924). In 1929 Voynow toured the South, cutting hillbilly, race, and Mexican titles on portable equipment.

The July 1927 issue of *Talking Machine World* announced that R.W. Jackson, who had been general sales manager of the billiard and bowling division of the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company, was appointed general sales manager of Brunswick's musical division, succeeding A.J. Kendrick. The March 1928 issue of TMW reported that Frank S. Horning replaced William A. Brophy as Manager of the Brunswick recording laboratory in New York City. Brophy had resigned. Horning had been sales manager for the Sampson Electric Company in Chicago. Horning himself was replaced in January 1929 by Louis Katzman.

The Year 1928

In 1928 Brunswick began to make and sell radios. The popular Brunswick 5WO radio featured a separate speaker and an RCA 60 chassis. The Model 5KR Brunswick radio sold for \$95.00 (without tubes) and was available at "convenient terms." To help boost sales, prices for all Panatrope models were reduced.

Page 19 of the January 1928 issue of TMW announced that William ("Bill") F. Wirges had been appointed new recording director for the Brunswick Laboratories in New York.

In 1928 the Brunswick Hour of Music was broadcast from WGN in Chicago every Wednesday evening at 8:00 p.m. In addition to a varied program by the Brunswick House Orchestra, Brunswick artists such as Ben Bernie, Nick Lucas, Al Jolson, Lee Sims, and Vincent Lopez were featured when they were in the Chicago area.

In the U.K., British Brunswick entered into an agreement with the Duophone and Unbreakable Record Company, Ltd. The two companies pooled manufacturing and sales facilities for about a year. Plans were also made for marketing a popular-priced Panatrope. Released pseudonymously on the Duophone label were some Brunswick-Balke-Collender recordings originally cut for the American market but never actually issued in the U.S. These included records by Red Nichols.

Brunswick 4033, featuring Al Jolson singing



The Model 3KR6 Brunswick Panatrobe with Radiola was introduced in February 1929.

"Sonny Boy" (cut on August 20), was probably the company's best-selling disc of the 1920s. Page 127 of Larry F. Kiner and Philip R. Evans' *Al Jolson: A Bio-Discography* (Scarecrow Press, 1992) reports that when Jolson in 1930 asked for a royalties statement, the list of sales showed that "Sonny Boy" had sold 938,466 copies in the U.S., earning Jolson over \$70,000 in royalties. No Jolson record up to this point had come close to the success of "Sonny Boy." Having Jolson on its roster of artists brought prestige to Brunswick—he had been calling himself "the world's greatest entertainer" since the World War I era, and Brunswick repeats that bold claim on some labels beginning with "Sonny Boy"—but few of his Brunswick

records sold more than 50,000 copies in the U.S.

Country records sold so well that the company issued a newsletter called the "Brunswick Record Edition of American Folk Songs." The first is dated October 23, 1928, and features short articles about such artists as the Kessinger Brothers, Doc Bates and His Possum Hunters, the All Star Entertainers, Caplinger's Cumberland Mountain Entertainers, the Flat Creek Sacred Singers, Ron Harvey and His Ramblers, Buell Kazee, Bascom Lunsford (the Minstrel of the Appalachians), the McCravy Brothers, blind artists McFarland and Gardner, and the Tennessee Ramblers. Records by these artists are also listed.

The newsletter includes short histories of some folk songs and states, "Desiring to obtain a collection of these Original American Folk Songs, the Brunswick Company sent its newly developed electrical recording apparatus down into the mountains of the South, where it recorded the best of them on imperishable discs which will gain in value with the passing years."

The Year 1929

Some editions of the January 1929 Brunswick record catalog have 131 pages while others have only 124 pages. Page three announces that Brunswick had established a one-price policy which made all 10-inch records 75 cents each and all 12-inch records a dollar each. Page four announces that the correct speed for Brunswick records was now set at 78 rpm (throughout the acoustic era, record sleeves had stated, "Brunswick Disc Records should be played...at a speed of eighty revolutions per minute"). All the records listed in the catalogue were electrically recorded except for a special listing of older mechanically recorded discs on the last seven pages of some editions of the catalog (it is stated that these mechanically recorded performances would not be available after December 31, 1930). A special section lists 14 album sets, mostly of symphonic recordings, most of those from German masters.

In January 1929, Russian-born Louis Katz-

man was named new Recording Manager for the New York and Chicago Laboratories. In February, the Brunswick Topics format was changed—it was printed in two colors and consisted of 16 pages. In March, prices for Panatrope models were again reduced. In April, Brunswick purchased the business and assets of the Bremer Tully Mfg. Co., maker of radio receiving sets and equipment.

In May, Brunswick announced plans for a new recording laboratory to be built in Chicago on the 21st floor of The Furniture Mart at 666 Lake Shore Drive. The new Chicago studios featured a machine that could record three masters at one time. Records were also recorded at 33 1/3 rpm for moving pictures, and these long-play discs were made in 10-, 12-, 16-, and 18-inch sizes. Jack Kapp was named Supervisor of the four recording studios that made up the laboratory.

Dick Voynow, who in 1924 made Gennett records with Bix Beiderbecke as member of the Wolverines, was "assistant director of the Brunswick recording laboratory of Chicago," according to page 60 of the December 1929 issue of *Talking Machine World & Radio-Music Merchant*. In 1929 Voynow headed an eight-month tour throughout the South, recording hundreds of selections—not only Mexican but "hill billy [sic], French-Cajun, race, and popular"—on portable equipment. (Page 27 of the September 1931 issue of *Metronome* states that he "is in charge" of the Chicago studio.)

Executives considered the company's musical division to be failing since sales of phonographs, records, and radios were down. In the U.K., British Brunswick and Duophone suffered setbacks. Duophone sold its New Malden pressing factory to the new Decca Gramophone Company, Ltd. In October British Brunswick was petitioned into liquidation. The last British Brunswick records appeared in October (one year later, on October 11, 1930, Warner Brunswick, Ltd., was formed).

Warner Brothers Acquisition

In April 1930 the Brunswick company completed arrangements with Warner Brothers Pictures

for the sale of its musical division, which included radios, phonographs, and records—all for around \$10 million. The Warner company was doing well with Vitaphone talkies, and brothers Harry, Albert, and Jack Warner (Sam had died in 1927) envisioned a subsidiary record business using Warner Brothers stars. They were interested not in Brunswick phonographs but in other technology. Authors Cass Warner Sperling and Cork Millner state in *Hollywood Be Thy Name: The Warner Brothers Story* (Prima, 1994) that the Warners "bought the radio, record, and phonograph divisions of Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company for the company's patents, its record factory, and its stillborn 16mm home talkie projector. In particular, Harry wanted the company for its record presses needed to make Vitaphone discs." This turned out to be a mistake since sound-on-film soon replaced sound-on-disc as the standard method of sound projection for motion pictures.

Changes were made to labels for discs issued after the Warner acquisition. The bottom of labels stated "Brunswick Radio Corporation" and "Subsidiary of Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc." This began around Brunswick 6000 in the regular popular series (the company jumped from 4999 to 6000, skipping over numbers in the 5000 range). Also, the old phrase "Panatrope with Radio, Radio-Records" was changed to "Radio with Panatrope, Radio, Records."

The label remained this way until changes were made in early 1932 to reflect the American Record Corporation acquisition ("Subsidiary of Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc." was eliminated, leaving only "Brunswick Radio Corporation" as an identifying name; soon "Brunswick Record Corporation" replaced "Brunswick Radio Corporation," with "Radio with Panatrope, Radio, Records" eventually eliminated). In later years small changes would be made to the label. For example, "Not Licensed for Radio Broadcast" was placed to the spindle hole's left (along with matrix number) in early 1933, then placed above the hole. But the label was not dramatically changed until 1937, this time to a black and silver design.

The new owners discontinued the "New Hall of Fame" series. For additions to the classical section of the Brunswick catalogue, the company relied heavily not on American artists but on Deutsche Grammophon-Polydor matrices.

Brunswick Radio Model 12

This must be the most petite of upright models. Measuring 42 1/2 inches tall and 17 1/2 inches wide, it features a beautiful walnut cabinet with small turned legs. The front of the cabinet is ornamented but does not contain a decal or name plate indicating that it is a Brunswick product. Instead, at the back on the main radio chassis is an elaborate decal which has printed in large script on a gold banner the name "Brunswick." Under this in small black print is "Armored Chassis" and still further below, "Superheterodyne" and "Brunswick Radio Corporation, New York, New York." The radio has five tubes and a 7-inch speaker.

From Warner Brothers to ARC

The years 1931 and 1932 were doleful for the phonograph and record business, and Warner Brothers soon realized their mistake with the purchase of the Brunswick phonograph and record enterprise. Records by their movie stars such as Gloria Swanson, Noah Beery, Harry Richman, and Al Jolson did not sell well in this period. Warner Brothers sold the rights to the Brunswick label in Britain to the Decca Record Company, Ltd., and on December 3, 1931 sold the U.S. Brunswick records and trademark to the American Record Corporation (ARC) for a nominal sum.

Page 70 of the January 1932 issue of *Phonograph Monthly Review* states, "Announcement has been made to the trade that the Brunswick Radio Corp. has turned over to the new Brunswick Record Corp. the manufacturing and sales rights to Brunswick, Vocalion and Melotone records for the United States, Canada and certain foreign countries. The Brunswick Record Corp. was formed by Consolidated Film Industries Inc.



A movie-related disc featuring an obscure song. It was probably used for an advertising trailer.

and adds another important unit to the complete circle of service that this company is offering to motion picture and other branches of the amusement industry. The Brunswick Record Corp. has already announced to the trade that the same sales and laboratory management and, to a large extent, the personnel formerly operating for the Brunswick radio will be in charge of these operations for the Brunswick Record Corp."

When purchasing the Brunswick label, ARC signed an agreement with Warner Brothers to continue to record, press, and market records under the Brunswick label for approximately 10 years. Although ARC was to name its new Brunswick record division the Brunswick Record Corporation, Warner Brothers retained ownership of the Brunswick Radio Corporation, which made records mostly for radio broadcasting though labels stating "Brunswick Radio Corporation" (without the familiar "Subsidiary of Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc." phrase) were issued in 1932, and these appear to be ARC products. Examples from mid- and late 1932 include Brunswick 20108 (Casa Loma and Connie Boswell), 6319 (Cliff Edwards), and 6341

(Anson Weeks). Production of Brunswick Panatrophe and radio models ended.

Industry insiders often referred to ARC and Brunswick together as ARC-BRC. This important change to Brunswick came when the Columbia Phonograph Company, Inc. also had new owners—it was acquired by the Grigsby-Grunow Company, maker of radios and refrigerators. In 1933, ARC acquired Columbia assets from the bankrupt Grigsby-Grunow Company, so finally the Brunswick and Columbia names were owned by the same company. In late 1938 the names Brunswick and Columbia were acquired by the radio giant CBS though rights to the name Brunswick soon afterwards reverted to the Brunswick Radio Corporation, which was acquired by Decca Records.



Labels of 1930-31 say "Brunswick Radio Corporation" and "Subsidiary of Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc.," but the latter phrase is missing from the mid-1932 disc above. This appears to be a transitional label. ARC soon printed "Brunswick Record Corporation" on new releases. The letter "N" under catalog numbers means a record was cut in New York whereas "L" means Los Angeles.

Upon acquiring the Brunswick record division in late 1931, ARC was a leading label for the first time, with a roster of major artists, including Bing Crosby, leading crooner of the day. Crosby made his first Brunswick records, "Out of Nowhere" and "If You Should Ever Need Me," on March 31, 1931 in Los Angeles, accompanied by a studio band. Because of changes in the industry, recordings made by Crosby and other artists for the Brunswick label prior to November 17, 1931 were eventually owned by Decca, which purchased the Brunswick Radio Corporation; recordings made by Crosby and others for the Brunswick label after November 17 eventually were owned by the Columbia Recording Corporation, a subsidiary of the Columbia Broadcasting System, Incorporated (CBS), which brought ARC-BRC in February of 1938.

Providing further details about ownership changes in the late 1930s would go beyond the scope of this article, which is mainly concerned with developments of the record and phonograph division of the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company. The sale of that division to Warner Brothers Pictures proved to be fortuitous for the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company since sales of phonographs and records soon declined dramatically. The \$10 million sale to the Warners helped Brunswick pay debts and survive the Great Depression.

With the repeal of prohibition in 1933, demand for bar fixtures increased, especially for inexpensive and streamlined models in Art Deco styles, and Brunswick sold these along with soda fountains and table top refrigerators. When Benjamin Bensinger died on November 27, 1935, the company was reduced to the size it was at the turn of the century. Sales in 1928 were \$29.5 million but in 1932 were only \$3.9 million.

During World War II, Brunswick factories were busy due to government contracts calling for parachute bomb flares, assault boats, aircraft fuselages, fuel cells for aircraft and floating mines, landing skids, illuminating mortar shells, aircraft instrument panels, and even aluminum litters. As a manufacturer of boats and many other products, the company continues to thrive today.

Announcement By V78J's Editor

This issue of V78J is the last. My wife and I are now raising two children whereas we had none when I began V78J. Readers who are also chasing pre-schoolers in the home can easily imagine how most of my time is spent these days.

Though lucky to have superb articles on hand, I admit that compiling this issue was difficult since it was the last. I used to mail out thick issues in a timely fashion—my kids took longer naps and I was energized by dozens of new subscribers each month. But over a year ago readership stopped growing. Far from my goal of 800 subscribers, I stopped working hard at putting out issues. The decision to end V78J was an easy one.

The subscription base froze at 400 despite my promoting V78J in other journals (after the first year, such ads brought no new subscribers), at phonograph shows (friends with booths kindly displayed issues of V78J but this attracted no new subscribers), and on my Internet homepage (this worked—most of the new subscribers in recent years have been novice collectors who learned about V78J while exploring the Internet).

What could I have done to attract more readers? Long ago friends advised me that more collectors would subscribe if V78J would run advertisements, especially "wanted" and "for sale" ads. They suggested various changes in format. But then V78J would have ceased being the journal I wanted to produce.

Many V78J readers have expressed great enthusiasm and would happily re-subscribe, but I also know that if V78J were to continue into a fourth series, not all current subscribers would renew. Would V78J end up with only 300 subscribers? It feels right to end it now.

Putting together issues from 1994 to 1998 was very enjoyable. I will not list here the many writers who helped V78J during those years since I may accidentally leave out names, but I am grateful to all who submitted articles. After each issue was finished, I found I had enough material left to start the next. With so many willing to contribute articles, my job as editor was easy!

One reward of editing V78J was meeting people who entrusted me with rare information. Some donated splendid articles while others loaned old catalogs and trade journals. I xeroxed what I could borrow (always careful to damage nothing!) and will need a decade to digest fully all that has come my way. Through V78J I tried to make available to others some of that information.

I study old trade publications—*The Phonoscope*, *Talking Machine World*, *Phonograph Monthly Review*, others—and can identify many topics that should be explored by researchers. I will continue to write, sharing what I know and sharing what I will be learning in coming years. The Internet beckons.

Of course, the Internet is no substitute for a well-edited journal. I prefer presenting information in a journal since words on a printed page seem permanent. Facts published in journals are at your fingertips when you need those facts and will be available to future generations whereas anything posted today on web sites can be gone by the time you get around to searching for that information. We should figure out ways to pass along to future generations what we know today. A journal can do that, even one with a low circulation.

But V78J cannot continue. Since no other journal does what V78J has probably done best—publish detailed articles along with many carefully selected visuals about pre-1930 phonograph companies and recording artists—I will give away more and more information on my homepage ("<http://www.garlic.com/~tgracyk>").

I began V78J to learn from others and to publish articles that I wanted to write—great reasons for starting a journal but not compelling ones for continuing V78J after four years. Meanwhile, I am proud that I published so much. Please tell friends that issues—with all the special inserts!—are available, \$50 for 13 issues (\$60 for overseas).

My ambitious encyclopedia of recording pioneers is nearly finished, yet my appetite for information continues to grow, so if you have items to loan or sell, let me know!

Art Hickman, Dance Band Pioneer

By Bruce Vermazen

Arthur G. Hickman was born June 13, 1886, in Oakland, California, to Robert and Lucinda Hickman. Robert ran a restaurant at the time but later would be a saloonkeeper, cigar maker and dealer, and bricklayer. Lucinda had been in vaudeville. Besides Art, the Hickmans had a younger child, Pearl. Some time before the turn of the century, the family moved to San Francisco. Although Art lived in Los Angeles for a few years in the 1920s, he maintained a San Francisco residence with his parents and sister throughout his adult life.

By the age of 13—probably in 1899 or 1900—Art worked as a Western Union messenger. In an interview published in the April 11, 1928 edition of the *San Francisco Examiner*, he said, "I used to greet with joy the chance to deliver a message to some hop joint, or honky-tonky in the Barbary Coast. There was music. Negroes playing it. Eye shades, sleeves up, cigars in mouth. Gin and liquor and smoke and filth. But music! There is where all jazz originated." He also said that ill health later "drove" him to become a musician, but it is unclear what he meant. Perhaps he wanted to be a professional athlete since he is described in one source—the September 3, 1938 edition of the *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*—as a "camp follower" of the San Francisco Seals baseball team, and in another source (*SF Examiner*, 10/30/20) as having an athletic appearance. By 1913 he was the entertainment manager at San Francisco's Chutes Theater (*SF Call-Bulletin*, 9/3/38). He had no formal musical training but became a drummer and played piano by ear.

The San Francisco Seals trained at Boyes Hot Springs in Sonoma County, north of San Francisco, in late February and early March of 1913, and Hickman joined them "to do a little fraternizing with his friends the newspaper correspondents," among them E.T. "Scoop" Gleeson, who wrote for the *San Francisco Bulletin*.

As Gleeson told the story 25 years later, Hickman suggested to the team's management that he bring up some of his musician friends from San Francisco to put on some dances. The band's instrumentation is unknown aside from banjo. The addition of a banjo was regarded as a novelty by Gleeson, in retrospect, although Henry Osgood reports on page 89 in *So This Is Jazz* (Boston, 1926) that Herman Heller had included two of them in his San Francisco dance orchestra in 1909. Gleeson reports that "some one said he [Hickman] got the notion from watching one of the Negro orchestras at Purcell's on the Barbary Coast."

One source says that Hickman at this time played piano in the band, another that he played drums. In 1949, when pianist Frank Ellis died, *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen gave the personnel of "the original five-piece Art Hickman band" as Ellis, piano; Hickman, drums; Otto Lercher, trumpet; Fred Kaufman, trombone; and Mo Mojica, banjo. While not a reliable guide to the 1913 band's composition, the Caen item indicates something about early Hickman associates.

The Boyes Springs engagement was fateful for two reasons, the first being that James Woods, manager of the luxurious Hotel St. Francis on San Francisco's Union Square, heard the band and hired it to play at the hotel after the Seals training period was over. Woods continued to be a valuable patron to Hickman, and in 1930 was one of his pallbearers. The St. Francis engagement was the jumping off point for Hickman's fame, and it was one of the dining and dancing spots in the hotel after which Hickman named his most enduring song, "Rose Room," published without lyrics in 1917 (the song was published again in 1918 with lyrics by Harry Williams).

Moreover, as far as anyone has discovered, the word "jazz" first saw print in a "Scoop" Gleeson article in the March 6, 1913 edition of the *San Francisco Bulletin* about the Seals' training ses-

sion. Gleeson did not clearly apply the word to the music that Hickman's group played although perhaps Gleeson meant to when he said that the team's "members have trained on ragtime and 'jazz' and Manager Del Howard says there's no stopping them." Gleeson states, "Everybody has come back to the old town full of the old 'jazz' and they promise to knock the fans off their feet with their playing. What is the 'jazz'? Why, it's a little of that 'old life,' the 'gin-i-ker,' the 'pep,' otherwise known as the enthusiasalum [sic]." While the term might be used to describe peppy music, it wasn't a term specifically for a kind of music. At the end of the piece, Gleeson does connect "jazz" with music: "The players are just brimming over with that old 'Texas Tommy' stuff and there is a bit of the 'jazz' in everything they

do." The Texas Tommy was a dance that was reputed to be a product of San Francisco lowlife.

In an interview with the *San Francisco Examiner* (10/12/19), Hickman added details to the story but left it unclear whether his band's music was called "jazz" in 1913: "Hickman does not like the use of the word 'jazz' in relation to music. 'It has no association with music,' he said. 'It means something effervescent. The word was born in the first training camp of the San Francisco Seals at Boyes Springs, many years ago. The boys, not being allowed to drink, would ask for the bubbling water of the springs, calling it "jazz water." Gradually, the word was carried to the ball ground, and when action was wanted, the boys would call out, "come on, let's jazz it up." That is how an orchestra with life came to be known as a "Jazz orchestra." But none of us like the word,' added Hickman."

One of his Boyes Springs associates, banjoist Bert Kelly, later claimed to have used the label "Jazz Band" professionally beginning in 1914, so the application of the word to music seems to have begun at about that time and in that circle. Although the word seems to have been known in New Orleans and much of the rest of the United States as slang for sexual intercourse, New Orleans musicians did not apply the word to their music until they traveled north, in 1915 or 1916, and found the word already in use there. (See Peter Tamony, "Jazz: The Word, and its Extension to Music," *JEMF Quarterly*, Spring 1981.) No doubt this etymological fact contributed in some confused way to Hickman's later reputation in the San Francisco press as the originator of jazz.

In February 1914, after the St. Francis engagement and a stint as manager of Sacramento's Grand Theater, Hickman returned to the Seals training camp at Boyes Springs and, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle* (2/27/14), "arranged for a moving-picture operator, together with a lot of entertainers, to pass the nights away in "nightly shows...right on through the season." Bert Kelly reported in 1958 to Peter Tamony that later in the year, he and Hickman, along with George Gould



"Rose Room" became popular in the late World War I era, first in San Francisco, then elsewhere. It was revived in later decades, with notable versions by Jack Hylton, Duke Ellington, and the Benny Goodman Sextet. Soon after Hickman's instrumental version was published in 1917, a version was published with lyrics by Harry Williams. The above was cut on June 3, 1918. Hickman himself cut it on September 20, 1919.

on piano, played tea dances at the St. Francis, and that he, Hickman, and pianist Leon Carrol auditioned for the Cliff House. At some point in 1914, Hickman brought a larger group into the St. Francis—the nucleus of the orchestra with which he first recorded. An unpublished manuscript by Bert Gould (no relation to George) gives three independent sources for this lineup of the 1914 band: Walt Roesner, trumpet; Fred Kaufman, trombone; Frank Ellis, piano; Frank De Stefano and Marc Mojica, banjos; and Hickman, drums.

Early sources suggest that the 1914 St. Francis engagement was the first during which Hickman's group played for dancing. According to the San Francisco Musicians' union newsletter *Musical and Theatrical News* (4/15/19), "dancing in hotels was then [1914] an untried experiment in our city." *Broadcast Weekly* (4/4/31) confirms that Roesner, "son of San Francisco's only blacksmith," joined Hickman in 1914. *Musical and Theatrical News* (8/16/19) says that violinist Steve Douglas joined shortly after the group's inception. By 1917 the band also included banjoist Ben Black, Hickman's close collaborator for the next five years.

Henry Osgood's *So This Is Jazz* claims that Hickman added saxophones to his St. Francis group in 1914, but other sources put the date at 1916 or 1918. Whenever it happened, it was an important step, but Hickman was not the first. More important for his later fame was the addition of two particular saxophonists, Clyde Doerr and Bert Ralton. Bert Gould reports that they were added in 1919. Saxophones had been gaining in popularity all over the United States just before 1914, and had even begun to appear in printed orchestrations by 1916. According to an article in the August 16, 1919 edition of *Musical and Theatrical News*, the 1914 directory of the San Francisco musicians' union listed only four banjoists and two saxophonists. The Six Brown Brothers, former multi-instrumentalists who by 1919 were playing saxophones exclusively, were well known through their numerous phonograph records and their appearances in the Broadway shows and subsequent road tours of Fred Stone's



Another Joseph C. Smith rendition of a Hickman composition, cut on January 30, 1919—nine months before Hickman's recording debut.

hit vehicles, starting with *Chin Chin* in 1914. W.C. Handy had included a saxophone in his dance orchestra in Memphis as early as 1909, according to *So This Is Jazz*, and Reid Badger's biography of James Reese Europe, *A Life in Ragtime* (Oxford, 1995), gives lineups including a saxophone for several African-American bands in the period 1913-1916.

It is not certain that Hickman was even the first dance band leader to include more than one saxophone. Given the large number of 1917 printed arrangements with parts for both alto and tenor saxophones, it seems unlikely. But Hickman did more than just add saxes to a dance orchestra. He added two players with strong musical personalities to a band that developed a strong musical personality for itself, won a following in San Francisco, and finally enjoyed great success in New York City.

The Doerr-Ralton team created a sensation on both coasts. Contrary to some histories, they had not previously worked together. Doerr came from Coldwater, Michigan, where he had played

alto sax since high school. In 1916, he completed a Bachelor of Music course at the King Conservatory in San Jose, California, where he had concentrated on violin, but, in order to get a job at the Techau Tavern, just down Powell Street from the St. Francis, he dusted off his alto. He found the six-piece band at the Techau boring, to the point where he read *Argosy* magazine while he played. Hickman heard him there and hired him for the St. Francis. Bert Ralton, whose real surname was Rolfe, had been playing in west coast vaudeville before Hickman lured him into the Rose Room.

Hickman seems also to have been busy as a pianist, making duet piano rolls (as "AH") for the QRS company with such well known roll artists as J. Russel Robinson, Pete Wendling, Max Kortlander, and Lee S. Roberts. His first rolls were issued

in February of 1918, and before Art Hickman's Orchestra made its recording debut, 22 more rolls had been issued.

In the winter of 1916-17 jazz was a craze in New York, but it wasn't the jazz that Art Hickman played for fox-trotters in the Rose Room. The craze began around a white group from New Orleans that billed itself as the Original Dixieland Jazz Band (ODJB). A couple of other New Orleans jazz bands had preceded them in the metropolis, an African-American group called That Creole Band in 1915 and the Five Rubes (white) in 1916, but neither had made a big impression. The ODJB created a sensation playing rags, blues, and one-steps for dancing at Reisenweber's Cafe in Manhattan, and their success was compounded when their first records—the first recordings by any organization that we would now recognize as playing jazz—were released in 1917. Others from New Orleans and elsewhere soon imitated the ODJB's frenetic style as well as they could. Instrumentation for these groups generally followed that of the ODJB: cornet, trombone, clarinet, piano, and drums.

The craze for these combinations continued through 1918 and into 1919. In 1917, the Victor Talking Machine Company, after releasing a very popular ODJB disc, had negotiated with Hickman to record his orchestra but backed out when the federal government took over half of the Victor plant for the war effort, according to the *San Francisco Call and Post* (8/23/19). In 1919 the Columbia Graphophone Company struck a deal. The band was brought to New York in a private Pullman car equipped with a piano, and an unusually large number of titles (21) were cut in eight hard-working days spread over two weeks in September. (The recording data come from Brian Rust's *American Dance Band Discography, 1917-1942* [Arlington House, 1975], cited below as ADBD.) In the evenings, the band played at the Biltmore Hotel Roof, an engagement arranged by James Woods. Hickman's pay was reported to be "between \$30,000 and \$40,000," a respectable two weeks' salary in those days, even divided ten ways. En route to New York, the band played in



Cut in September 1919 and, according to *Talking Machine World*, available in San Francisco in December. But the first four Hickman discs were not issued *nationwide* until mid-February 1920. Ten-inch discs in Columbia's popular series were still 85 cents, a price established in the summer of 1918. By mid-1920 such discs sold for a dollar. Only early Hickman releases show prices since late in 1920 Columbia omitted prices from labels.

HOLD ME

FOX TROT SONG

Piano arrangement revised by
J. Bodewalt Lampe

By ART HICKMAN
and BEN BLACK



Denver, Salt Lake City, and other cities, according to the *San Francisco Bulletin* (8/23/19).

New York in 1919 was primed to welcome the Hickman Orchestra, partly since the jazz craze had gone on for a long time and the dancing public looked for something new. The Hickman group enjoyed a huge success at the Biltmore. Florenz Ziegfeld, Broadway's biggest impresario, took advantage of the band's presence in the city—it soon played for dancing on the roof of the New Amsterdam Theatre after the finale of the "9 O'Clock Revue." The band was engaged to play at the gala home-coming luncheon for General Pershing and the opening of a posh club at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, according to the *San Francisco Examiner* (10/7/19).

During the 1919 New York trip, the band consisted of Steve Douglas, violin; Walt Roesner, trumpet; Fred Kaufman, trombone; Clyde Doerr, alto and baritone saxes; Bert Ralton, soprano and tenor saxes and clarinet; Frank Ellis, piano; Vic King (who probably joined just before the trip), tenor banjo; Ben Black, plectrum banjo; Bela Spiller, string bass; and Art Hickman, drums and piano. The instrumentation is evident in a photo of the group published in the *Bulletin* before the band's departure; Marc Mojica, banjo-mandolin, is also in the photo but the accompanying story says that he did not make the trip because his high-pitched instrument was not expected to record well. An oboe and another, higher-pitched clarinet are also visible, but it is not clear whose they are.

They are on a rack with Ralton's soprano but on Doerr's side. Aural evidence suggests that Doerr played the oboe on the records. Spiller is mostly inaudible on the records, and the two banjos are placed far from the horn. The Orchestra must have sounded much more anchored and rhythmically forceful in a dance hall than it does on acoustic discs.

Hickman's new style of jazz became the talk of the big town. In a 1970 interview, Doerr reported that the sensation was created by two things: the band's combination of dance rhythm with jazz and the Doerr-Ralton sax team. The wind instruments in early jazz bands of the ODJB type had largely followed a military-band model, with a cornet lead, trombone counter-melody, and clarinet obbligato, rhythmically supported by an unmilitary drum kit and piano. Hickman's sound retained the polyphony of the horns but with more voices and greater fluidity of ensemble role. One or other of the saxophones played lead more often than the trumpet, and the texture shifted from four horns to a saxophone duet, to a passage in parallel octaves for trumpet, alto sax, and violin, to a piano duet, to a trumpet-trombone duet, to orchestra bells, to oboe and piano, and so on, using no discernible formula.

Cecil Leeson (1902-1989), a well known concert saxophonist, summed up the early Hickman style in an unpublished 1973 interview: "It was sort of every man for himself—one that could fake...and one that could play the melody,

and somebody else would stand in the corner doing this and that. I think that Art Hickman's Orchestra probably was the most famous example of that kind of playing."

Some books about early dance bands credit Hickman's group with having the first saxophone section, but section playing is usually understood as consisting of one instrument playing a lead line while the rest of the section plays harmonies to it. Doerr and Ralton seldom played that sort of harmonized line (on records, at any rate), certainly not in the way that Paul Whiteman made standard for saxophones. Most often, one of them played a mild improvisation on the melody while the other played an obbligato around it.

The arrangements, in general, seem to have provided minimal frameworks for constant playful improvising rather than setting down exactly what notes were to be played. Rarely do the records feature anything like a hot solo, but three piano duets by Hickman and Ellis from the 1919 sessions are worth noting—"You and I," "Rose Room," and "Midnight Maid." ("June," from the 1920 sessions, has another outstanding duet. Hickman and Ellis recorded "You and I," "June," and "Hold Me" for QRS rolls.) Bert Ralton's soprano saxophone in the last chorus of "Whispering," though not a solo, is also remarkable, presaging Sidney Bechet's 1923 debut recordings with Clarence Williams.

The Orchestra was such a hit in the fall of

1919 that Ziegfeld offered Hickman \$2500 a week to stay in New York. The bandleader refused. According to the October 7, 1919 edition of the *San Francisco Examiner*, Ziegfeld had said, "When a jazz band of ten men refuse to play three hours a night for \$2,500 a week it makes one wonder whether money is worth anything after all...They're crazy about San Francisco, so the only thing I could do was wish them a pleasant journey."

The band received a hero's welcome back at the St. Francis, with Hickman now the Hotel's assistant manager in charge of music. The first fruits of their Columbia efforts were released in stores nationwide in February 1920, and San Francisco's Columbia dealers successfully used a gimmick of selling the first four "by the set only," according to the February 1920 issue of *Talking Machine World*. Those four discs (Columbia A2811 through A2814) demonstrate the band's variety, from the wild jazz of "Those Draftin' Blues" to a tame reading of "Sweet and Low," a waltz by the composer of "Missouri Waltz."

Ziegfeld continued to make offers and on May 29, 1920 the Hickman organization closed at the Union Square venue (where the Republican national convention was about to take place) and left two days later for twenty weeks in the *Ziegfeld Follies of 1920*, making Hickman "the highest paid orchestra leader in America," according to the *San Francisco Examiner* (10/30/20). For two weeks be-

August 15, 1920

THE TALKING MACHINE WORLD

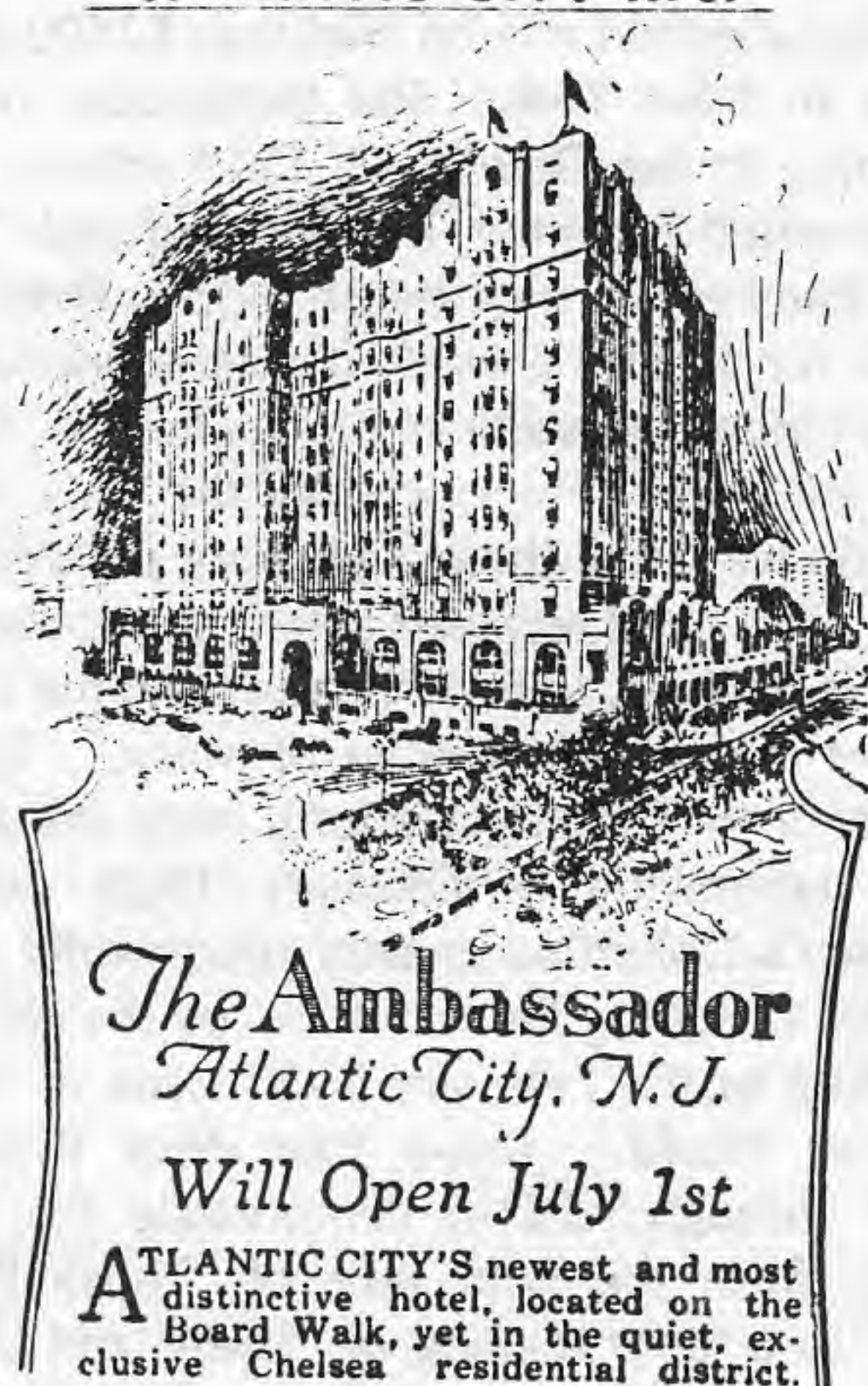
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Art Hickman's Orchestra from the St. Francis Hotel, San Francisco, now playing in New York at both the Ziegfeld Follies and Ziegfeld Frolic, makes records of "The Love Nest," medley fox-trot, and the fox-trot "Song of the Orient." Make your initial order blg. A-2955.

**Columbia Graphophone Co.
NEW YORK**



ATLANTIC CITY N. J.



When Paul Whiteman was "discovered" in June 1920 by Victor executives at Atlantic City's new Hotel Ambassador during a National Association of Talking Machine Jobbers convention, Hickman had just begun enjoying success as a recording artist. In 1921 Paul Whiteman became for Victor what Art Hickman was for Columbia—leader of that company's most popular dance band. The above is from the July 1919 issue of *Scribner's*.

fore he left, according to reports, "his departure took on the dignity of a Bernhardt farewell. Civic bodies gave him banquets, society leaders chipped in for gorgeously engraved cups, and there was a burst of forensic fireworks nightly in the Rose Room...and to cap the climax when he and the ten members of the band went to the station to take the private car Mr. Ziegfeld had placed at their disposal three bands and a cheering crowd were there to see them off."

The *Follies* tried out in Atlantic City, where, coincidentally, Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra

was performing at the Ambassador Hotel. Bert Gould reports that Clyde Doerr, who had lived at the same San Francisco address as Whiteman (17 Powell Street, but a year earlier), briefly visited with the bandleader. Whether the two groups had further contact at this time is not known. Hickman had been the most celebrated bandleader in San Francisco while Whiteman was still a sideman there. Whiteman's band at the Alexandria Hotel in Los Angeles in 1919 had almost the same instrumentation as Hickman's, except for having only one banjo and (in photos) two tenor saxophones.

However, by 1920, when his band first recorded for Victor, Whiteman's approach to music seems to have been different, owing to the services of arranger Ferde Grofé. Whiteman's brand of jazz was more carefully arranged and musically sophisticated than Hickman's, borrowing themes and harmonic devices from classical music. When Whiteman played in a hotter vein, as on "Wang-Wang Blues," waxed in August 1920, the orchestration was only a streamlined version of what ODJB-type groups had been playing three years earlier. At the band's wildest (for example, on the last chorus of their first hit "Whispering," also recorded in August 1920), it only briefly suggested the characteristic Hickman turbulence.

According to Clyde Doerr in a 1970 interview, Jimmy Thompson and his partners, owners of the Palais Royal and several other New York night spots, urged Hickman to stay in New York when the *Follies* ended. As in 1919, Hickman insisted on returning to San Francisco. The Thompson organization instead hired Whiteman, a break that ultimately—in 1923—resulted in Whiteman's publicized "coronation" as the King of Jazz, a title already conferred upon Hickman by the *San Francisco Bulletin* as of August 12, 1919.

In 1920 Hickman's group, now billed as Art Hickman's Famous Midnight Frolic Orchestra, again wowed Gotham. During the *Follies* tryout the band recorded again for Columbia, as it did on nine more occasions during the show's run. The revue—headlined by Fannie Brice, Eddie Cantor (for the first week only), and W. C. Fields (Fields also

collaborated on the "book")—was a thundering success. The Orchestra appeared only in the show's mass fox-trot finale, according to *Variety* (6/25/20), playing Irving Berlin's "The Syncopated Vamp" early in the show's run and later Hickman and Black's "My Midnight Frolic Girl." After the show it played for dancing on the Roof of the New Amsterdam Theatre, as in 1919. The Jerome Remick Company bought a full-page ad in the July 2 issue of *Variety* to announce the purchase of rights to Hickman and Ben Black's "supreme ballad fox-trot," "Hold Me." During June of 1920, according to *Variety* (7/9/20), the Orchestra's disc of "Along the Way to Damascus" and "Rose of Mandalay" was Columbia's best seller. Just before the Orchestra left New York, it appeared in a Pathé newsreel, which played San Francisco's California Theatre during the first week of November.



MAY 15, 1921

THE TALKING MACHINE WORLD

67

Art Hickman's Orchestra plays nothing but hits. "Siren of a Southern Sea" and "Day Dreams" are its latest delightful fox-trots just recorded in San Francisco. Are your customers going to dance this Summer? We'll say they are! A-3387.

**Columbia Graphophone Co.
NEW YORK**



cording to *Talking Machine World*. The Orchestra now had only one banjo (Ben Black), but an unidentified second trumpet had been added, audible only on five sides. On these five, the trumpets are only once used as a conventional section, on "I Spoiled You." The second trumpet is also audible on "Goodbye Pretty Butterflies," "Hokum," "Honeymoon Home," and "Happiness." On "Happiness" the two horns play off one another in Doerr-Ralton style. As described in Bert Gould's manuscript, Hickman also made an unissued test pressing as a solo pianist.

After the 1921 Columbia sessions, the band that had startled New York continued its slow breakup when Clyde Doerr accepted an offer from Harry Yerkes to return to New York for recording work, becoming a bandleader first at the Club Royal, then at Chicago's Congress Hotel.

In September 1921, the group inaugurated the Cocoanut Grove of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, remaining until April 1, 1922. Hickman had announced plans for a hiatus in his performing career, during which he would devote himself at least partly to writing songs. Walt Roesner returned to San Francisco in 1921 or 1922 to play and arrange for Paul Ash's symphonic jazz orchestra. In 1922, Frank Ellis and Ben Black also returned, Ellis leading a dance orchestra first at the Cliff House, then at the St. Francis's Garden and

Fable Room (formerly the Rose Room), and Black fronting a twenty-piece symphonic jazz group at the California Theatre.

In June 1923, James Woods hired Hickman as assistant manager and amusement director of the new Los Angeles Biltmore, which opened on October 1 with hoopla. A new version of Hickman's Orchestra played in the Supper Room, broadcasting regularly on KHJ via one of the first remote radio hookups until the end of 1925. It is unclear what musical role Hickman played in the Biltmore band, or in Art Hickman's Concert Orchestra, which also broadcast from the hotel. KHJ schedules often announced the former's director as Earl Burtnett and the latter's as Edward Fitzpatrick.

In June 1924 and March 1925, Art Hickman's Orchestra recorded for Victor, and it was directed by Burtnett (who was also, according to the December 23, 1925 issue of *Variety*, the band's pianist). Trumpeter Roy Fox was also on the 1924 sessions, held at the Alexandria Hotel and described in Fox's autobiography, though a 1926 *Variety* article suggests that Fox was leading his own orchestra (at Los Angeles's Club Lafayette) by the time of the 1925 sessions.

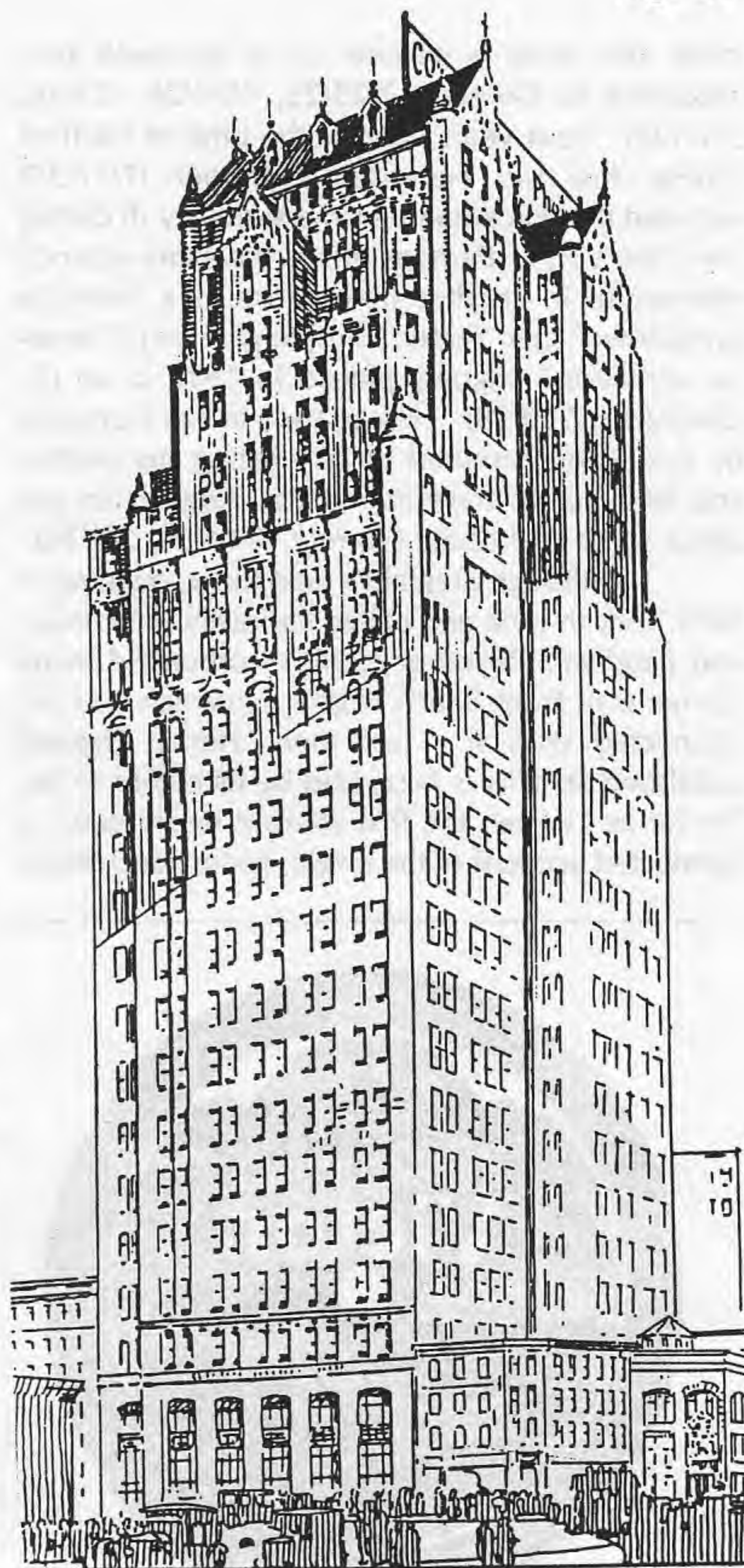
The 1924-25 band cut some hot sides for Victor, notably "Patsy," "G'wan With It," and "If I Stay Away Too Long From Carolina." Whether Hickman played on the sides is unknown, but the

second and third of those mentioned feature solos by a drummer playing with brushes. Although impressive—especially on "Patsy"—the arrangements are more conventional than those of the 1919-21 band, similar to those of contemporary California bands like Herb Wiedoeft's Cinderella Roof Orchestra (in Los Angeles) and Paul Ash and His Granada Theatre Orchestra (in San Francisco).

The August 4, 1925 edition of the *Los Angeles Times* reported Hickman's announcement that he would resign from his managerial post at the Biltmore effective September 15 although he would continue to manage the orchestra and to broadcast. *Variety* on November 11, 1925 announced that Hickman would close at the Biltmore the day after Christmas and open in Palm Beach, Florida, in a Ziegfeld show in January. Earl Burtnett quit the Hickman group at the end of the Biltmore engagement, organizing his own 10-piece band (including Roy Fox) for the Columbus Hotel in Miami, Florida, according to the December 23, 1925 edition of *Variety*. A news item suggests that Frank Ellis had returned to the Orchestra by the end of 1925.

The *LA Times* announcement of Hickman's resignation added that he hoped to return to his career as a songwriter. He had been very successful in that role, copyrighting 19 songs by the end of 1924, more than half of them in 1920-21. Several obituaries said that his biggest hit had been "Hold Me," sold to Remick for \$42,000. Besides "Hold Me" (a collaboration with Ben Black) and "Rose Room," the 1919-21 Hickman Orchestra had recorded at least five other Hickman compositions: "You and I," "Come Back to Georgia," "June," "Molly O" (written with Black), and "Dream of Me" (written with Black and Jerome). But "G'wan With It" (1924) was to be the last tune he copyrighted.

On January 14, 1926, Art Hickman's Orchestra became an after-show feature of Ziegfeld's new revue, *Palm Beach Nights*, at the Club Montmartre in Palm Beach, Florida. Although tickets were expensive (\$11), the wealthy who wintered in the newly booming peninsula city



On April 4, 1921, the Columbia Graphophone Co. moved from Manhattan's Woolworth Building (Columbia's home since 1913) to the top eight floors of this building, the new Gotham National Band Building at Broadway and Columbus Circle. Recording labs were on the top three stories.

made the show a success for a ten-week run, according to *Variety* (12/23/25, 1/20/26, 2/3/26, 3/17/26). Four years later, at the time of his final illness, the *San Francisco Examiner* (1/17/30) reported that Hickman became seriously ill during the show's run. Perhaps this is the same episode referred to in another news story as a "nervous breakdown" that "forced [him] to give up his musical activities," vaguely placed in 1927 or so (*SF Chronicle*, 7/28/29). He was back in San Francisco by mid-April, reported to be visiting his mother and later to be traveling to Los Angeles to see about some real estate (*Variety*, 4/14/26, 5/5/26).

Although Ziegfeld's next show, opening in New York in June and called variously *No Foolin'* and *Ziegfeld's Revue of 1926*, incorporated many elements of *Palm Beach Nights*, Hickman was not connected with it. Just then, Henry Osgood published *So This Is Jazz*, said by its author to be, "so far as I know, the first attempt to set down a connected account of the origin, history and devel-

opment of jazz music" (vii), in which he informed the reader on page 90 that "the first complete modern jazz combination, including a saxophone, I have been able to locate played there [at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco] in 1914. Art Hickman, who came East later and did much to arouse popular interest in the kind of music so well known on the coast, was its leader. The combination was two saxophones, cornet, trombone, violin, banjo, piano and drums." This recognition must have been gratifying for the ailing Hickman.

On August 5, 1925, Hickman had signed an exclusive contract with Victor, agreeing to make a minimum of ten sides in the next twelve months. Only a few sides were cut. Probably owing to his bad health, the contract was not fulfilled. But in April 1927, Art Hickman's Orchestra recorded for Victor in San Francisco's Clift Hotel. It was now conducted by Walt Roesner, who was in the third year of fronting his own symphonic jazz group, the Super-Soloists, after two years with Paul Ash.

The style of these Hickman records, possibly due to Roesner's influence, is much more like Whiteman's than that of the 1924-5 sides. "I'll Just Go Along" even opens with a quote from Dvorak's "Symphony from the New World." But there are some hot solos, especially from an unknown Red Nichols-influenced trumpet. Evidence indicates that this group is, or at least overlaps with, the Super-Soloists: Hickman seems not to have had a working band at the time; Roesner's group was at Oakland's T & D Theatre, the address given on Victor logs for Hickman; and this group turned out seven released sides in only fifteen hours, all cut in the morning, suggesting a well-rehearsed band with an evening gig.

Ziegfeld offered the bandleader spots in *Show Boat* and *Good News* (both produced by Ziegfeld in 1927), but Hickman turned down the offers, probably because of failing health. By the summer of 1929 he was in St. Francis Hospital, suffering from "overwork and nervous exhaustion," according to the *San Francisco Chronicle* (12/31/29), but also, according to the *Los Angeles Times* (1/17/30), from Banti's disease, which in-



In 1924 Hickman began the second phase of his recording career, this time with the Victor Talking Machine Company. The above is one of Victor's earliest West Coast products—cut in Los Angeles on June 13, 1924, and then pressed in Oakland.



This was cut on April 19, 1928 in New York City but not by Hickman. Brian Rust's discographies identify this as a Nat Shilkret production. Was it mainly for distribution in California, where Hickman's name was well established? The above is an Oakland pressing, as indicated on the label by the tiny "o" near Nipper's nose.

volves anemia, enlargement of the spleen, cirrhosis of the liver, and fluid in the abdominal cavity.

That year, Hickman was again recognized by the American intellectual world. Abbe Niles's article "Jazz" (vol. XII, pp. 982-4), in the fourteenth (1929) edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, after giving a quaint account of the music's history, says that "before the official appearance of jazz, New Orleans, if not other places, had genuine negro jazz bands, obscure and illiterate, but playing a violent form of this music, chiefly marked by a polyphony of strange tone-colours and instrumental effects." He reviews the ODJB and some of its followers, then states, "The inevitable movement to modify the hideous noisiness of early jazz was led by Art Hickman, a California orchestra leader, and later taken over by Paul Whiteman...The present-day 'sweet' jazz, sprung from the Hickman-Whiteman reaction against caco-

phony, is opposed to 'hot' jazz." Again, the accolade must have been gratifying.

In an interview two weeks before he died, Hickman told a *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter, "In the early spring I plan to get back into the work harness and do a talkie on the history of jazz for Florenz Ziegfeld." Surgical intervention failed. The end came on January 16, 1930. His death was announced on the *San Francisco Examiner's* front page with this headline: "Art Hickman, Founder of Jazz, Dies." The accompanying story stated, "The man who took the tom-tom throbs of San Francisco's old Barbary Coast negro rhythms, adapted them to the wail of the saxophone and twang of the banjo and gave the world its first jazz music, died yesterday afternoon at the St. Francis Hospital." It backed up the headline with this false claim: "The Encyclopedia Britannica credited him with being the originator of the jazz tempo, the man responsible for the music that has swept America and the other continents in the past fifteen years."

Although the kind of jazz that Hickman "founded" turned out to be a dead end, he made a genuine contribution to popular music, resulting in an enormous amount of pleasure for listeners and dancers of three decades.

Thanks to the following for their ideas and help in research: Steve Abrams, Margaret Downie Banks, Virginia Billings, Eric Bernhoft, Nan Bostick, John Gill, Vince Giordano, Alan Hall, Patricia Hall, Peter Mintun, George Morrow, Paul Price, Ed Sprinkle, Daniel Warren, Olly Wilson, and librarians and staff at the Doe and Bancroft Libraries of the University of California, Berkeley, the Los Angeles and Oakland Public Libraries, the New York Public Library Music Division, and the Shrine to Music Museum at the University of South Dakota.

Visuals for this article and their captions were provided by V78J's editor.

Homer Rodeheaver: Pioneer of Sacred Records

By Bob Olson

Music evangelist and gospel singer Homer Rodeheaver was the most prolific recorder of sacred songs in the acoustical recording era, singing before the recording horn of most major companies. Several evangelists had recorded earlier, beginning in the mid-1890s when Ira D. Sankey, accompanying himself on a Mason and Hamlin melodeon, sang hymns in the Leeds and Catlin studio at 53 East 11th Street in New York. Sankey went on to make Edison and Columbia cylinders in the late 1890s. Sankey was song leader for the famous evangelist Dwight L. Moody. On January 17, 1898, for Berliner 662, Moody himself recited "Beatitudes from the Sermon On The Mount" (he recited the first ten verses of the Beatitudes). Evangelist Gipsy Smith had recorded several twelve-inch records for Columbia in 1910 and 1911, and British evangelist William McEwan started his Columbia recording career in mid-1913. General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, made one twelve-inch record for Columbia.

Many record artists included sacred songs among their repertoire, notably Henry Burr and Frank C. Stanley. John Young and Frederick Wheeler used the pseudonyms Harry Anthony and James F. Harrison when they cut gospel duets, which sold well. But among singers who recorded religious songs almost exclusively, Rodeheaver had no peer. He was on at least eighteen record labels during his recording career, from 1913 to 1942, with over 500 sides issued.

Early Life and Career

He was born Homer Alvan Rodeheaver on October 4, 1880, in Union Furnace, Ohio. The family moved to Tennessee when he was a child. The brief biography that appeared in the yearly Victor catalogs from 1919 through 1925 states, "Homer Rodeheaver is a Southerner. He began his career in a mountain log camp [his father owned a lumber business in Jellicoe, Tennessee], and in

later years learned the trombone and played in the 4th Tennessee [Regimental] Band, going with them to the Spanish-American War. After singing and playing his way through the Ohio Wesleyan University, he leaned toward the law, but was induced to enter the evangelical field."

In 1904 Rodeheaver entered the musical evangelism field and in 1909 joined Billy Sunday to serve as vocal soloist and song leader for Sunday's many nation-wide gospel crusades. He was the George Beverly Shea (Billy Graham's soloist) of his day, but, unlike Shea, he also led the congregational song services with his trombone and the Billy Sunday 2500 Voice Mixed Chorus. The chorus made one Victor record: "Sail On" backed by "America" (18322).

He had a talent for leading audiences in the song services before Billy Sunday's sermons, his genial and informal manner getting even the most shy and retiring to participate. By all accounts a jovial man whose sincerity was infectious, he was affectionately known to associates as "Rody." He worked with Sunday for 20 years, until 1929, and wrote a book titled *My Twenty Years With Billy Sunday*. Sunday was the leading gospel evangelist in this century's early decades and was important to the cause of prohibition.

Early Victor Records

Rodeheaver's first records were made for Victor in 1913, and he recorded for the company for almost 20 years, with 67 issued numbers. Along with gospel songs, or "revival hymns" as they were often called, he sang prohibition songs and did recitations. His first Victor disc, 17455, coupled the hymn "Old Fashioned Faith" with the anti-alcohol song "De Brewer's Big Hosses" (a disc made three years later, Victor 17988, features another prohibition song, "Molly And The Baby Don't You Know"). His second disc, Victor 17456, featured "If Your Heart Keeps Right" and

"The Unclouded Day," both sacred songs. The third issue, 17478, consisted of four recitations, two to a side: "To My Son" with "Mother's Love" backed by "Daddy" with "That Little Chap Of Mine." Perhaps his most requested recitation, not recorded by Victor, was "Me An' Pap An' Mother."

Victor literature identified him as Billy Sunday's choir leader and soloist. Supplements of March and April 1915 advertise "Four New Rodeheaver Hymns": "Jesus, Blessed Jesus" backed by "Jesus Remembered You" (17713); and "An Evening Prayer" backed by "How Sweet Is His Love" (17714). The supplements state, "The Victor records by this popular evangelistic singer which were issued last year [17455, 17456, 17478] have been much appreciated, and these March selections are sure to be widely sought by customers who are interested in the Sunday meetings."

Victor's June 1915 supplement promotes two songs as being "'Billy Sunday' Favorites by Rodeheaver": "Brighten The Corner Where You Are" and "I Walk With The King" (17763, both listed as "revival hymns"). It states that the songs were favorites in recent Philadelphia meetings and that the singer's voice was in fine condition after his brief rest following a strenuous campaign.

His most recorded song was "Brighten The Corner Where You Are." It was Sunday and Rodeheaver's theme song, and Rodeheaver recorded it for at least 17 different labels. The next most recorded titles were "Mother's Prayers Have Followed Me" (13 issues); "If Your Heart Keeps Right" (13 issues); "The Old Rugged Cross" (11 issues); "Since Jesus Came Into My Heart" (10 issues); "In The Garden" (9 issues); and "My Wonderful Dream" (8 issues).

He cut many duets with a colleague in the Sunday campaigns, contralto Virginia Asher, called Mrs. William Asher on most labels. Their first release—in July 1916—was one side of 18020, "In The Garden," backed with the Rodeheaver solo, "When The World Forgets." Victor's September 1921 supplement announced the release of their duet of "Where The Gates Swing Outward Never," which was backed with Rodeheaver's solo performance of "All The Way To Calvary" (18780), and the supplement calls them "Two of the best known evangelistic singers in America." Asher was his most regular recording partner.

His last acoustical recording for Victor was "Christ Is All" backed by "Trusting Jesus That Is All," (19452), both solos. The record is announced in the December 1924 supplement. In all, he recorded 37 acoustical sides for Victor.

Edison Cylinders and Discs

The second company Rodeheaver recorded for was Thomas A. Edison, Inc. He cut six songs in early 1914 that were issued in July 1914 as Blue Amberols 2349 through 2354. "Somebody Cares" and "I Walk With The King" were issued only as Blue Amberols, never on Diamond Disc, but four songs issued on Blue Amberols were recorded again, on January 2, 1915, for Diamond Disc release: "Mother's Prayers Have Followed Me" and "My Father Watches Over Me" were issued on cylinders in 1914 and on Diamond Disc 50228 in 1915; "If Your Heart Keeps Right" and "Old Fashioned Faith" were issued on cylinders and on Diamond Disc 50229.



Diamond Disc 50228 remained in the catalog until Edison went out of the commercial record business in late 1929. In fact, 12 of the singer's 15 Diamond Discs were still in the catalog at the end (since he was on both sides of the discs, which was not typical for Edison artists, he was on 24 sides at the end).

Introducing the new artist, the May 1914 issue of *Edison Phonograph Monthly* states, "As a boy he had a contralto voice, and when his voice changed, it developed into a splendid robust baritone....About ten years ago Mr. Rodeheaver felt the call to evangelistic work, but refused to enter the work at that time as he wanted to finish his college course and go to law school. However, these plans were spoiled, for he accepted what he thought would be a brief engagement as a musical director with Dr. W.E. Biederwolf. He stayed with Dr. Biederwolf for five years and then accepted the same position with Rev. W.A. Sunday. In his work with Mr. Sunday he...directs the largest choruses in the whole country. They number from twelve hundred to two thousand in the different cities. He possibly sings to more people night after night than any other man in the whole world today."

Almost ten years went by before Rodeheaver recorded for Edison again, in November 1924. "Carry Your Cross With A Smile" and "All The Way To Calvary" were issued as Diamond Disc 51399. The Edison company was later than other companies in adopting electric recording methods, and his first electric Diamond Disc was released in February, 1928: "Carry Thy Burden To Jesus" backed by "You Can Smile" (52178).

A portion of a Rodeheaver recording, "My Wonderful Dream" (Diamond Disc 51682), was issued on one of Edison's 13 Sample Records. Sample Record #4 was issued February 18, 1926, a month before the Diamond Disc featuring the entire performance was released. Two songs were issued on needle cut Edison 11024 in August 1929: "Where The Gates Swing Outward Never" and "The City Unseen." Both are duets with Thomas Muir and both were also issued on Diamond Disc 52452.

In all, twelve songs were issued on Blue Amberol cylinders from 1914 to 1928, the last one being Blue Amberol 5583 ("Take Up Thy Cross"). One additional title, "In The Garden With Jesus," was assigned a Blue Amberol number (5511) but was never actually released to the public.

Columbia and Other Companies

His first Columbia disc was issued in the spring of 1916: "Brighten The Corner Where You Are" and "If Your Heart Keeps Right" (A1990). His first Columbia recording with Virginia Asher was their popular "In The Garden" (A2667), backed by a Chautauqua Preachers Quartette performance. Columbia's February 1920 record supplement characterizes two new numbers by the duo—"Still Undecided" and "When I Look In His Face" (A2833)—as "revival hymns." There were nine couplings by Rodeheaver in the A- prefixed series, the last, "Standin' In The Need Of Prayer" backed by "Old Time Religion" (A3856), released in June 1923. Both sides of A3559, "Heab'n" and "Some O' These Days," released in May 1922, were identified in the 1923 Columbia catalog as being taken "from Book 'Plantation Melodies.'"

In June and July of 1917, Emerson issued two seven-inch records and four six-inch one-sided records with Rodeheaver performances: "Brighten The Corner Where You Are" backed by "A Rainbow On The Cloud" (7158), and "Since Jesus Came Into My Heart" backed by "If Your Heart Keeps Right" (7191). The six-inch issues were 5194, 5195, 5224 and 5225. He seems to have made no other Emerson recordings.

Pages 126 and 127 of the May 1921 issue of *Talking Machine World* note his readiness to promote records in Cincinnati: "Rodeheaver visited many of the dealers while here and took quite an interest in boosting the sales...Manager Donovan, of the Shilito talking machine department, reports a good month and states the Rodeheaver records had quite a run. 'Rody' gave several public recitals at Shilito in connection with the Victor while he was here and came over one morning to let the

public see how records were made. He brought Mrs. Ascher [sic], Miss Kinney and Mr. Matthews with him and they made about a dozen records."

On August 20, 1921, he made what may be the first Gennett recordings in the company's Richmond recording plant (matrices 11000 through 11004). Before this time, with the exception of experiments in Richmond, recordings were made in New York and were transported to the Richmond factory for pressing. However, nothing from the August 20 session was released. In May 1922 he recorded eighteen numbers, of which only four recitations were released: "Two Old Pals" backed by "Me An' Pap An' Mother" (4882), and "Daddy" along with "Little Chap Of Mine" backed by "The Mother's Love" (4893).

Beginning on April 14, 1922, he began recording prolifically for Gennett in the company's New York studios. From July 1922 until February 1924, 27 records—with both sides featuring Rodeheaver—were made by Gennett (4860 through 5285), all but three of them recorded in New York. On the B side of Gennett 5664, "The King At The Door," recorded on June 24, he sings with a female singer identified as J.N. Rodeheaver (the A side features Rodeheaver as solo artist singing "Shining Shore"). Earlier, Gennett issued a record by Ruth Rodeheaver (her married name was Thomas): "O Hear Him Calling Thee" backed by "Tis The Last Rose Of Summer" (4901). But the baritone evidently never recorded duets with Ruth. It is likely that Ruth was his daughter; "J.N." was possibly his wife.

He was on at least three Herwin discs that used Gennett matrixes: 75512, 75513, and 75514. Four titles were also issued early in the Gennett subsidiary Champion label series (15150 and 15151).

The Talking Machine World Advance Record Bulletin of July 1922 that listed his first Gennetts also listed titles offered by the Aeolian Company on its Vocalion label: "I Walk With The King" backed by "Life's Railway To Heaven" (14339). His first for the company was Vocalion 14033, issued in April 1920: "Brighten The Corner

Where You Are" coupled with "I'm Coming Home, Mother's Prayers Have Followed Me." He recorded for the company until 1926, by which time the Vocalion label was owned by Brunswick, with 15311 issued in June: "He Lifted Me" backed by "Will There Be Any Stars In My Crown."

He did not record much in early 1924 due to traveling. Page 12 of the July 1924 issue of *Talking Machine World* states, "On his return from Australia after a trip around the world, Homer Rodeheaver, famous evangelistic singer and Gennett record artist, tendered a luncheon to the staff of the New York office of the Starr Recording Laboratories, makers of Gennett records, in celebration of his homecoming." At this time Tom Griselle was music director of the laboratories.

He cut at least two songs, "Jesus Blessed Jesus" and "Drifting," for the Bridgeport Die & Machine Company, makers of Puritan records and subsidiary labels. He evidently never recorded for Pathé. Sacred numbers in the Pathé catalog—called "Billy Sunday Hymns"—were sung by William Wheeler, called both a tenor and baritone (he was trained as a tenor). Catalogs of various companies identify Rodeheaver as a baritone.

Rainbow Sacred Phonograph Records

In late 1920 he founded his own record company. It was evidently headquartered in Chicago, at first at 440 South Dearborn Street. From the beginning the new company had recording labs in Winona Lake, Indiana (later in New York City as well and perhaps Chicago) and branch offices were established on the East Coast. Page 138 of the January 1921 issue of *Talking Machine World* announced the new venture: "The Rodeheaver Co., 440 South Dearborn Street [Chicago], is out with the announcement of the first release of 'Rainbow Sacred Phonograph Records.' These consist of selections by famous evangelistic speakers and singers....The recording laboratories are situated at Winona Lake, Ind., which has long been famous as a center of evangelistic effort. The company has also an East-



In late 1920 Rodeheaver founded his own record company. *Talking Machine World* announced the company's formation in its January 1921 issue.

ern branch at 814 Walnut Street, Philadelphia."

The April 1921 issue of the trade journal reports similar information: "The first releases of the Rainbow record of the Rodeheaver Record Co....have met with much favor....For the present, at least, the recordings will be confined entirely to sacred songs....It is planned to have any excess profits from the record business help support a training school for evangelists at Winona Lake, Ind. The Rainbow laboratory has been established at Winona Lake, Ind., and the distribution of the records will also be made from the offices of the Rodeheaver Co. [in Philadelphia and Chicago]."

The journal's October 1921 issue states on page 34: "The Rodeheaver Record Co., the head of which is Homer Rodeheaver,...has now established headquarters at 150 East Forty-first street, New York City, with Thomas P. Ratcliff in charge as general manager. The company plans to do considerable recording at the new headquarters, as well as at Winona Lake, Ind., where much of the recording has been done in the past. The permanent laboratories of the company will still be main-

tained at Winona Lake, which, during the Summer, is the gathering place for Bible students and those in training to become song leaders, under the direction of Dan Bedoe [sic] and Fred Martin...The new Rainbow records, which is the name of the Rodeheaver Co. products, are made under the direction of C.R. Johnson, a recording expert of wide reputation, who has been connected with the trade for thirty-two years."

The inclusion of tenor Daniel Beddoe on the Rainbow roster—the above cited article states that he "is now under exclusive contract with the Rodeheaver Co."—would have brought some prestige to the fledgling company. Years earlier Beddoe had won fame as a concert artist, recorded for Victor's Red Seal series, and recorded for other companies, including Brunswick. The third item in the Rainbow catalog, Rainbow 1003, featured on one side Beddoe singing "A Heart Like Thine." However, both numbers that initially appeared on 1003 (the other side featured a "Mixed Quartet") were eventually replaced by numbers sung by Rodeheaver. At some point at least 12 of the first 20 Rainbow catalog numbers were reused, and these different couplings complicate any discographer's attempt to list all Rainbow releases. The Rainbow label series ran from 1001 to 1130. Most feature Rodeheaver himself.

At some point the Chicago office was moved from South Dearborn Street to 218 S. Wabash Avenue, not far from Orlando Marsh's recording studio at 308 S. Wabash. In fact, advertisements for Marsh Laboratories, Inc. in 1927 list Rainbow as one of Marsh's customers (by 1927 the Marsh laboratories had moved to 64 East Jackson Blvd.). The last Rainbow releases were made from electrically recorded masters, and perhaps Marsh had supplied these.

From the beginning Rainbow records featured a colorful rainbow at the top of the label. The recordings are usually harsh. Most are acoustical. Early issues state, "Rainbow Sacred Record, Rainbow Record Co., Chicago-Philadelphia...Recording Laboratory, Winona Lake, Ind." They also state, "This record approved by Homer

Rodeheaver." Soon on the label the company name was changed to Rodeheaver Record Company. Some records list New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Winona Lake under the company name, others just Chicago. The rainbow also was given a lighter hue. Under the rainbow on every label were the words "Ev'ry cloud will wear a rainbow if your heart keeps right," taken from the song "If Your Heart Keeps Right." Toward the end of the series the label was changed to a bright red, with gold print, and a gold cloud appears with the rainbow in the form of a music staff. Cities listed at the bottom were Philadelphia and Chicago.

Rodeheaver also put out private recordings on a "Special" label—the word "Special" is on the label itself. Discs were not assigned record numbers. The label was red, the print gold. The label design was curiously like Victor's "wing" label. Price was a dollar. The label states, "Rodeheaver Recording Laboratories, Chicago, Illinois, Personal Recording." These were not restricted to sacred material. One features a tenor identified as Paul Stone Wight of Scottdale, Pennsylvania. On one side he sings "God Knows We're Here To Stay." The melody is that of Bonds' "A Perfect Day" but new lyrics concern the Ku Klux Klan. On the reverse he sings the melody of the famous railroad song "Casey Jones"—again, lyrics are about the KKK. Both performances feature piano accompaniment.

His trombone playing was featured during revival services and Victor supplements of the early 1920s include photographs of Rodeheaver with his trombone, but only one record is known to feature him playing it: the A side of the first Rainbow record (1001). He plays on trombone a verse of "Safe In The Arms Of Jesus," then sings one verse, then finishes with trombone. It is backed with "I Walk With The King" as a vocal solo.

The Winona Lake facilities were the center for Bible Conferences, and Rodeheaver had assembled a mixed chorus. Two Rainbow records feature the Winona Lake Chorus of 600 Voices: "Hallelujah What A Savior" backed by "Awakening

Chorus" (1013), and "The Star Spangled Banner" backed by "Brighten The Corner" (1014). Rodeheaver sings as a solo artist on the last number.

Some of his solos, as well as Rainbow numbers that do not feature Rodeheaver, were evidently recorded in the Chicago studios. The matrix numbers on these included a 6000/7000 series written under the label, and a 3-digit series.

But he also had two recording sessions at the Gennett New York studios, 13 numbers and 2 remakes in June, 1925, and 11 numbers in March, 1926. Sixteen of these songs, eight records, were issued on Rainbow only, with the Rainbow issue numbers shown in the Gennett ledgers. Only one record, both sides with Charles Hart—"Grace Greater Than Our Sin" backed by "Jesus Has Loved Me"—was issued on Gennett (3280), the last Rodeheaver release on the label, in May, 1926, as well as on Rainbow 1120/1121. The session also included two other numbers with Hart: "Praise His Name" and "I Need Jesus" (Rainbow 1119), the latter a trio including Donald Chambers. Six of the titles, three from each session, were not released.

Ledgers state for Gennett 3280, "We can use these without giving Rode credit." Regarding the charge for one of the two sessions, ledgers state, "Billed to Rodeheaver Co. June 25, 1925.



RAINBOW RECORDS

Sacred records by men and women,
famous in the field of gospel work.
Favorite hymns, old and new, negro
spirituals, inspirational talks, all
have a steady, year-round appeal.

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distributors. Write for
our proposition today.

The Rodeheaver Company
Record Dept. No. 103
218 S. Wabash Ave. 814 Walnut Street
Chicago Philadelphia

Total recording expense, including everything on 13 numbers and 2 remakes. \$2,162.50." For the March 1926 session, charges totaled \$1,187.50.

During the March 1926 session he cut four numbers that were patriotic: "Battle Cry For Freedom" backed by "America The Beautiful" (1124), and "America For Me" backed by "Columbia's Song" (1125). Two of his other patriotic numbers were released in Gennett's personal recording 20000 series, "Hats Off To Old Glory" and "Battle Hymn of the Republic," both on Special 20167.

More Records of the Late 1920s

The Fall 1926 edition of the Sears Roebuck catalog began featuring performances on the Silver-tone label under a new heading, "Selections By Homer Rodeheaver." Of 52 titles on 26 discs, 11 were in the 3800 series, with 4 more added later, 15 using the same 4000 and 5000 numbers as on Gennett. All were from Gennett matrixes and are acoustical. Both 1927 catalogs had the same listing with 25 records. This dwindled to 12 in the Spring 1928 issue. All were gone when the Fall 1928 catalog featured the Silvertone 8000 series.

In the mid-1920s he recorded for Brunswick and Okeh for the first time. The first Okeh disc featured duets with Asher—"The Old Rugged Cross" and "Love Led Him To Calvary" (40415)—and was released in September 1925. The last of nine Okeh records featured "A Child Of The King" backed by "The Old Fashioned Meeting" (40689).

He recorded even less for Brunswick—ten songs issued on five records, beginning with "When The World Forgets" backed by "An Evening Prayer" (2899) and ending with "Throw Out The Lifeline" backed by "Yield Not To Temptation" (3260), which appears to be a scarce record (it was never in Brunswick's catalog). The last title was never recorded by him for any other label, but the "Throw Out The Lifeline" matrix appeared in the Sears Roebuck Fall 1931 catalog on Supertone S-2118, backed with "In The Garden" by the Perry Brothers, who were McFarland and Gardner. The other titles were in the 1927 Brunswick catalog.

In the electric era, Victor issued 13 Rodeheaver couplings from recording sessions held on November 3 and 5, 1925, and January 4 and 5, 1927. Numbers from these sessions were released from February 1926 to June 1928. Most of these couplings, nine in all, were remakes of earlier acoustical recordings. Three songs (both sides of 20999—"Drifting" backed by "Closer To Jesus"—and one side of 21337—"Where The Gates Swing Outward Never") were duets with Henry Burr, the only sacred songs they recorded together.

His first electric recordings for Columbia were issued on 417-D, released in October 1925: "We Are Going Down The Valley" and "Is My Name Written There." Unlike with Victor, there was only one remake of an earlier number for Columbia. The last of the acoustical recordings with Virginia Asher was 211-D, released in December 1924: "Shall We Gather At The River" backed by "Take The Name Of Jesus With You."

From this time on his Columbia duets were with Doris Doe. Of the nine Columbia couplings from 417-D to 1201-D in 1928, seven featured either one or both sides with Doe. For example, 1201-D, released in January 1928, had a solo by Rodeheaver, "Sweeter As The Years Go By," coupled with a duet with Doe, "The Church By The Side Of The Road." The coupling from Columbia 872-D, "The Unclouded Day" and "Satisfied There," both duets with Doe, were remastered and released in mid-1935 on Vocalion 02960.

When his association with Billy Sunday and his crusades ended in 1929, Rodeheaver's music publishing company was flourishing. Rev. Sunday passed away in Chicago in 1935.

The 1930s and Beyond

Rodeheaver did little recording in the 1930s. On March 28, 1931, he recorded two numbers for Columbia: "There's A Rainbow Shining Somewhere" and "You Can Smile," both with The Rodeheaver Singers. These were released on Columbia 2432-D and were listed in the 1934 Columbia Royal Blue catalog.

On April 27, 1932, he cut the same numbers and two others for RCA Victor. The "Rainbow" side was backed by "He Keeps On Loving Us Still" (24163), the "Smile" side backed by "The Christ Of The Cross" (24164). The company's 1934 catalog lists these under the titles only, not under "Rodeheaver" with his other numbers. Both discs were deleted by the next catalog, but the 1936 and 1938 catalogs still had 16 of his earlier titles. The 1940-1941 catalog—the last big catalog before the U.S. involvement in World War II—still listed four of titles (Victor 19875 and 20385).

The Fall 1933 Montgomery Ward catalog, the first with the MW label, listed three records from Victor matrixes, one side only: "In The Garden" (MW M-4350, taken from Victor 20385), "The Old Rugged Cross" (MW M-8117 taken from Victor 19875), and "Brighten The Corner Where You Are" (M-8155 taken from Victor 19880).

Since 1909 he had been in the gospel song publishing business under names such as the Rodeheaver-Ackley Co, The Rodeheaver Co., and the Rodeheaver Hall-Mack Co. He bought up many copyrights and re-copyrighted them under his own name. Around 1936 he started copyrighting under the name of "The Rodeheaver Co," Winona Lake, Ind. Those with previous copyrights were shown as "The Rodeheaver Co., Owner." He is credited with publishing 80 different song books. He composed a few songs himself and the music for a number of others. He owned the copyright on hundreds of songs. His two most famous copyrighted songs were "In The Garden" and "The Old Rugged Cross."

In the late 1930s or early 1940s, after the advent of the run-in groove on records, Rodeheaver started a short-lived new Rainbow electrically recorded series, again starting with the 1000 issue numbers. "Mother's Prayers Have Followed Me" (D7-CB-1195) was issued with "How Tedious And Tasteless" (D7-CB-1196)" on Rainbow 1006. On Rainbow 1011, "A Child Of The King" (QB-6310-1-07)" was issued with "The Glory Of His Presence" (QB-6311-1-07). These scarce records have organ accompaniment. The

label is red on the lower half, gold on the upper, with the label name and the rainbow in red, with company credit of "Mfd and Licensed by Rainbow Record Co., Chicago and Winona Lake, USA."

In the 1940s he served for a time as music leader for the Bob Jones University. Two sermons by the Rev. Jones had been issued on Rainbow 1025 in the 1920s. Among his last recordings are two five-disc Decca sets. He recorded in late 1939 *Album of Gospel Hymns* (2621 through 2625) and, in early 1942, *Album of Gospel Songs #2* (4219 through 4223). Two of the 4200 numbers, "Jesus Took My Burden" and "Good Night And Good Morning," were re-issued on Decca 14511 in late 1949 in Decca's purple labeled Faith Series.

One LP that features a Rodeheaver track is *Yesterday's Voices*, produced by Word Records in the late 1970s. The track is "Then Jesus Came," cut around 1950 for an International Sacred Recordings 10-inch LP. This Rodeheaver composition opens with a short sermon. The singer is accompanied by organ. Also on the LP is a Billy Sunday sermonette condemning "booze."

In his last years Rodeheaver presented sacred concerts, evidently with a sermon. My younger brother, stationed in the Air Force in 1951 in San Antonio, Texas, attended such a concert at the First Baptist Church. Rodeheaver was in good voice and still played trombone solos, telling the audience it was the same trombone he had played for troops in the trenches, which may refer to his time with the regimental band in the Spanish American War. Researcher Quentin Riggs briefly met Rodeheaver in 1955 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and asked the identity of uncredited singers who assist the baritone on Victor 17455, "De Brewer's Big Hosses." Rodeheaver replied that this was an octet that sang with him at revivals.

Homer Rodeheaver passed away in the town of Winona Lake on December 18, 1955, at age 75. His gospel publishing company continued for about 20 years after his death, being bought out by the Word Publishing Co. Today his copyrighted songs are shown as by The Rodeheaver Co., a Division Of Word, Inc.

The Life and Writing Career of Ulysses "Jim" Walsh

By Tim Gracyk

Jim Walsh was recognized in his lifetime as *the* authority on American artists who recorded popular (as opposed to classical) music in the industry's early decades. For anyone conducting research on such artists, Walsh articles are essential secondary sources. Others have written about old records, with opera and jazz experts being numerous in the last half century, but Walsh was unique.

He wrote about vintage recordings for over half a century, beginning in 1928 and continuing into the 1980s. He was most closely associated with the monthly publication *Hobbies*, writing for virtually every issue from January 1942 to May 1985. A decade after he began his series, he wrote in the May 1952 issue of *Hobbies*, "[A] pioneer artist has been defined, for my purposes, as one who was recording before double-faced discs became popular in 1909." In that same 1952 article Walsh announced his decision to broaden his scope: "I intend from now on to stretch the term to include anyone who was making records before electric recording was introduced in 1925." On subject matters dearest to him—dozens of acoustic era artists who recorded popular fare—no others matched Walsh's expertise.

Early Years

He was born Ulysses Walsh in Richmond, Virginia on July 20, 1903. Late in life he refused to disclose the year of his birth (Richmond documents were destroyed in a courthouse fire), but early articles reveal it. He writes in the February 1932 issue of *Phonograph Monthly Review*, "It was the summer of 1914. The historian [Walsh himself], then a boy of eleven, had moved the family Victrola to the front porch of his home at South Boston, Va....Several years earlier, probably late in 1910, the writer, then seven years old..." He states that he is 25 in "Pioneer Phonograph Advertising" in the March 1929 issue of *Phonograph Monthly Review*.

Quentin Riggs discovered the date July 20, 1903 for Walsh in Social Security files made available to the public, and though such files are often incorrect (they cite the wrong date for Walsh's death), the year 1903 confirms what is suggested in early Walsh articles.

Walsh wrote in the June 1969 issue of *Hobbies*, "...'Ulysses' is the name my parents gave me, and 'Jim' only a nickname I acquired later." Naming the boy "Ulysses" was daring for his parents, William Ernest and Katie Lillian (Wrenn) Walsh, since the name would have reminded fellow Southerners of Northern general Ulysses S. Grant. Jim Walsh told reporter Pat Perkinson, for an article published in September 1965 in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, "My father was a great admirer of Ulysses S. Grant." Six months after their son was born, the Walshes moved to Durham, North Carolina.

Walsh writes in the June 1972 issue of *Hobbies* that, as a boy, he was "usually known to his friends as 'E'" and "had not acquired yet the nickname of 'Jim.'" "Ulysses J. Walsh" was used for articles in the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s. He used the name "Ulysses ('Jim') Walsh" in *Hobbies* from 1942 to 1949. Beginning with the June 1949 issue of *Hobbies*, he used the simple name "Jim Walsh."

Writing about his family background in the June 1969 issue of *Hobbies*, Walsh stated, "I came from a family that was Republican and Protestant. As far back—which isn't very far—as I have been able to trace my ancestry on both my mother and father's side, I have found no trace of Catholic forbears...[My ancestors] all seemed to have headed South." His father was an insurance agent. Jim Walsh had one brother, Dr. Chad Walsh, who became head of the English department at Beloit College, in Beloit, Wisconsin.

Walsh attended public schools in Virginia and resided in that state for his entire life aside from a short time as a baby in North Carolina and

later as a reporter in Tennessee just across the Virginia border. He grew up in the small Virginia towns of South Boston and Marion.

The earliest surviving piece of writing may be the article "Us and Co., As Second Carusos," credited to Lone Scout Ulysses J. Walsh. The town of Marion had a Lone Scouts organization instead of a Boy Scouts group. The young Walsh, a member, wrote for the town's Lone Scout publication. Late in life he sent a copy of the article to Quentin Riggs, saying he wrote it "shortly after I had entered my teens," so it probably dates from the World War I era. It describes his experience recording his "beautiful...boy soprano voice" on a blank cylinder purchased for 35 cents at a local drug store.

The June 1972 issue of *Hobbies* describes an Ada Jones concert given in early 1922 in Marion and attended by Walsh, who repeatedly calls himself in the article a "boy." He was, in fact, 18.



Jim Walsh was born on July 20, 1903, around the time new artist Henry Burr cut this version of "My Old Kentucky Home" and around the time Billy Murray, who would become Walsh's friend, began recording on the East Coast (the July 1903 issue of *Edison Phonograph Monthly* called Murray "a new man on our staff of entertainers").

From 1929 to 1931 he was head of the small music department at the Boggs-Rice Furniture Company in Marion. During this employment, as he recalled in the April 1973 issue of *Hobbies*, he sold "a Ruth Etting record to a young man who, I later learned, was Roger Wolfe Kahn, a famous dance band leader of the 1920's, and son of Otto Kahn, the multi-millionaire banker."

He might have sold records for a longer period had the Depression not reduced discs to slow-selling luxury items. He writes in the June 1962 issue of *Hobbies*, "I remember being in a small coaling-mine town in Tazewell County, Va., in 1932, and feeling astonished when I saw a sign on a drug store window: 'All the new records, 75 cents. Needles, 10 cents a package.' That sign seemed like something out of a past life. All the dealers in my home town of Marion, Va., had given up trying to sell records..."

From 1932 to 1934 he was a clerk at the Marion Post Office—an occupation, he wrote in that same April 1973 article, "that caused the late Christopher Stone, assistant editor of 'The Gramophone,' to dub me 'the literary postman.'" He states in the April 1964 issue of *Hobbies* that he "left Marion in 1934." He had been residing at 346 Chestnut Street.

Walsh as Journalist

Walsh's true vocation was journalism and he earned his living as a newspaper man by the late 1920s. In the March 1929 issue of *Phonograph Monthly Review* he mentions "a recent stay in Tennessee as a member of the staff of the Knoxville News-Sentinel." His first important reporting job was for the *Johnson City Press* beginning on October 29, 1934. It required a move across the Tennessee border. He writes in the February 1954 issue of *Hobbies* that by 1940 he was, for that newspaper, "chief reporter, editorial writer, feature writer and columnist." In 1943 he returned to his home state of Virginia to work as a staff writer for the *Roanoke World News*. He was also affiliated in Roanoke with WSLR-Radio-TV



and, beginning in June 1964, was a staff writer for the *Roanoke Times*.

From 1943 to 1954, he lived at 437 Cedar Avenue in Vinton, about three miles east of Roanoke. On August 26, 1954, he moved to 2524 King Street, Roanoke. In June 1959 he moved to a large white house at 225 North Maple Street in Vinton, where he remained for over two decades.

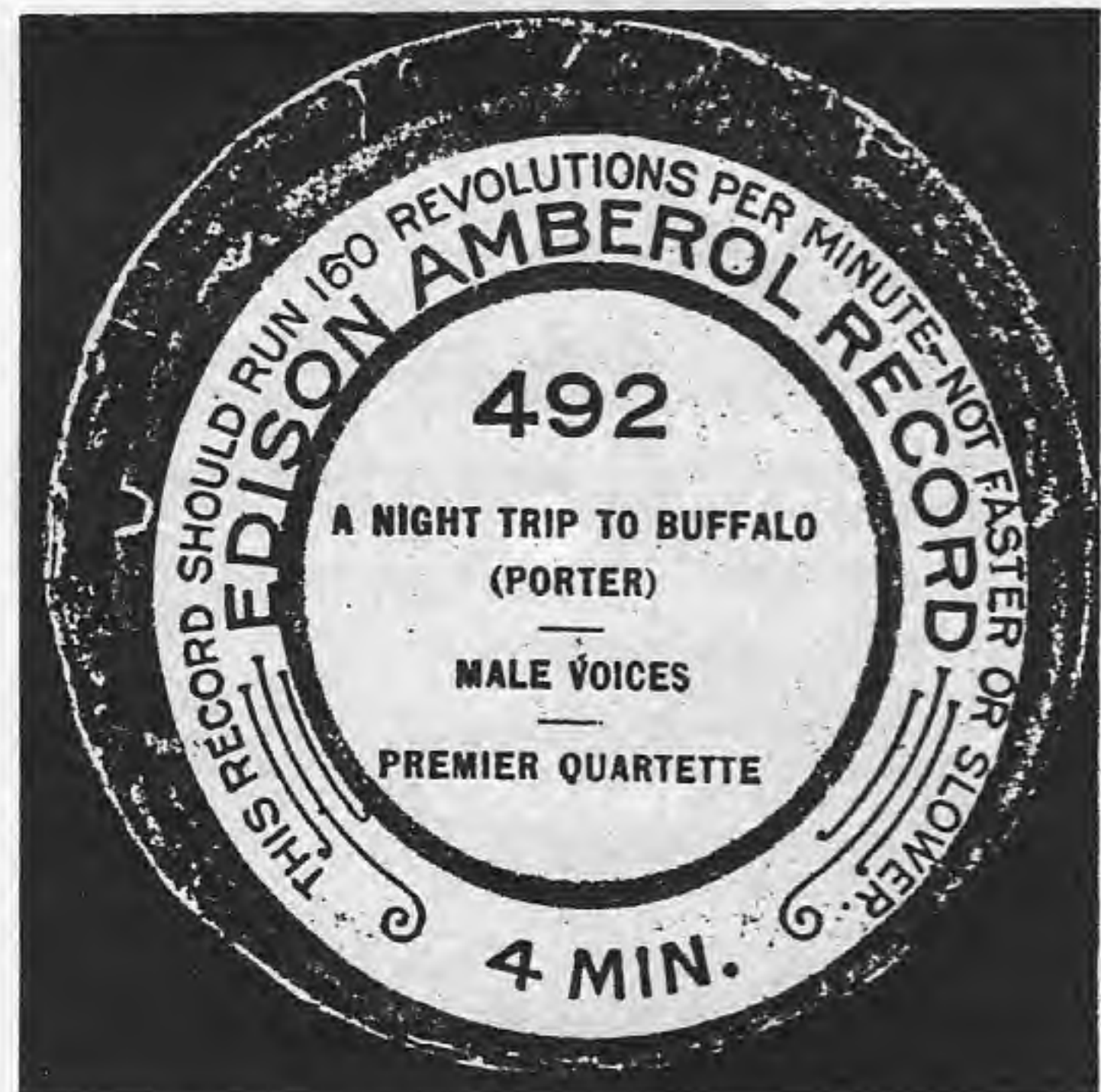
He hosted radio programs devoted to old records. His first, "Wax Works," was broadcast by WJHL in Johnson City, Tennessee, from 1939 to 1943. A show was broadcast from 1943 to 1960 by station WDBJ, then WSLS, in Roanoke, Virginia. The May 1945 issue of *Hobbies* features a photograph of Walsh sitting with announcer Dorothy Jennings Turner, broadcasting the program "heard at 5:30 each Saturday afternoon."

Early Articles About Artists

Walsh wrote about recordings for various publications before the *Hobbies* years. The name "Ulysses J. Walsh" appears in a phonograph journal for the first time in the June 1928 issue of *Phonograph Monthly Review*. He asks in a letter, "Who is—or was—Maurice Levi? Exactly what were his so-called 'Famous "Reuben" Songs' intended to be?...My interest in Maurice Levi is occasioned by

the fact that some time ago I secured, second-hand, an ancient Edison cylinder record..." The August 1928 issue features a longer letter in which Walsh discusses Edison technology, discusses Dan W. Quinn's attempt at a comeback in 1916, and lists early Victor discs, finally asking, "Who was George Broderick? He certainly seems to have had the field pretty much to himself."

His first article in a national publication was "Pioneer Phonograph Advertising" in the March 1929 issue of *Phonograph Monthly Review*. He states, "[A]lthough I am only twenty-five years of age...I spend more time brooding over the past achievements of recording engineers than I do appreciating the wonders of the present..." He wrote a dozen pieces for the trade monthly, with three articles titled in a way that suggested he was starting a series: "Reminiscences of 'Harry Macdonough'" (November 1931), "Reminiscences of 'S.H. Dudley'" (January 1932), and "Reminiscences



Walsh wrote in *Hobbies*, "'A Night Trip to Buffalo' has special interest for me because it was the first record I ever heard. I was 2 and being held in my mother's arms when I listened to its sounds emerging from the external horn of a neighbor's Victor...I have never forgotten it!"

of Anthony and Harrison" (February 1932). When he wrote in 1934 for *Music Lover's Guide*, edited by Drummond McKay, he used similar titles, such as "Reminiscences of Dan W. Quinn" (July 1934) and "Reminiscences of Collins and Harlan" (October 1934). Walsh states in this latter piece, written only a year after Harlan's death, that as a boy he had enjoyed a Collins and Harlan performance in Pulaski, Virginia in April 1917 when the comic duo appeared with the Eight Popular Victor Artists. The *Music Lover's Guide* articles are long and therefore more satisfying than his early *Hobbies* articles, which were restricted to about a page each issue. Some early *Hobbies* articles are even briefer. His tribute to Edward Meeker was broken into three installments, the March 1946 issue giving only six paragraphs.

A letter by Walsh in the December 1930 issue of *Phonograph Monthly Review* is notable for two reasons. In it, he announces an ambitious plan: "I have at length decided to begin work upon a history of recording companies and recording artists, provided I can obtain sufficient material upon which to base the history...I feel it is time that the activities and actors of the earliest days be chronicled in type. Otherwise much information that would be invaluable to phonographic antiquarians of the future will pass out of memory." He believed this history would take the form of a book ("The prospect of compiling a book of recorded information fills me with enthusiasm, but as I am in my twenties...I shall need some assistance..."), but in fact he fulfilled his ambition—of making certain that information does not pass out of memory—with a lifetime of articles.

The letter also establishes that Walsh at this time had access to few printed sources. He writes, "Lack of material...would seem to be my severest handicap. I particularly need old catalogs, but the recording companies have none to spare... My own Victor catalogs go back only as far as 1916, and I have none of other companies so old as that." Although decades ago researchers had an advantage in that they could contact those who had worked in the industry during the acoustic era

—that is not possible today—there were no organizations formed by fellow enthusiasts, no publications devoted to records of earlier times, no dealers who specialized in such items. Acquiring old catalogs and old records could be difficult. Walsh worked almost alone and started from scratch.

Another early article in a national publication is "Selling Records in a Mountain Town," published in the September 1929 issue of the trade journal *Talking Machine World and Radio-Music Merchant*. Walsh describes his strategies for increasing record sales as an employee of the Boggs-Rice Company of Marion, Virginia (a town of 3,500), which sold records, furniture, and other goods. Artists discussed in the article include Gid Tanner's Skillet Lickers, Frankie Marvin, and Seger Ellis—artists popular in his native Virginia at the time but not ones that Walsh would have counted among his favorites, as we know from preferences he expressed in later articles.

The young Walsh was determined to succeed as a writer. In the April 1973 issue of *Hobbies*, he recalls meeting, in the early 1930s,



PICCOLO SOLOS BY SCHWEINFEST.

Mr. George Schweinfest is a great artist. His matchless performances have given him a place of high honor among the musicians who entertain through the Graphophone.

- 23500 Golden Robin Polka.
- 23501 Darkey's Jubilee.
- 23502 Patrol Comique.
- 23503 Irish Reel.
- 23504 Skirt Dance.
- 23505 Hornpipe Polka.
- 23507 Medley Jig.
- 23508 Nightingale Polka.
- 23509 Old Folks at Home.
- 23511 Wren Polka.
- 23512 Yankee Doodle.
- 23513 Robin Adair.
- 23514 Nichols March.

Walsh told reporter Pat Perkinson that by the age of three he was friendly with a boy whose home had a Victrola, upon which Walsh first heard George Schweinfest's piccolo playing.

Robert H. Davis, who had been a *Munsey* editor. Davis recognized Walsh's name and asked if he had sent anything to *Munsey*. Walsh answered, "Yes...and I apologize. I was just a teen-age kid and I had no business bothering a busy man like you, but I sent you perhaps a dozen short stories, and you kept some of them long enough to make me think maybe you were going to buy them."

In later years he never referred to his articles that had appeared in the late 1920s in *Phonograph Monthly Review* and *Talking Machine World* and *Radio-Music Merchant*. He may have forgotten that he had contributed them. (He advertised in *Hobbies* for issues of *Talking Machine World* of the 1920s, which suggests that he did not have many copies of this trade publication.) Another possible reason for his not referring to early work is that Walsh late in life was sensitive about others knowing his age, and in several early articles Walsh had announced his true age. David Milefsky states in Issue 75 of *New Amberola Graphic*, "When once he learned that someone quite dear to him had tried to discover the year of his birth, he all but had a fit!"

Late in life he did express pride in an article first published on September 24, 1933. In the June 1969 issue of *Hobbies* he states, "My friendship by correspondence with [violinist and Edison executive] Arthur Walsh began in 1933 when I wrote the first article about record collecting published by any nationally circulated American magazine, as far as I know. The article was called 'On The Trail of the Rare Record.' It was published in the New York Herald Tribune Sunday Magazine (forerunner of 'This Week'), syndicated to many Sunday newspapers throughout the country, and reprinted in abridged form by a Canadian publication, Magazine Digest."

Walsh began a series of articles in 1939 for *The American Music Lover*, edited by Peter Hugh Reed. The series, titled "Gramophoniana," was short-lived. The second installment is Walsh's "Cut in Wax—Some Notes on Len Spencer," a longer and more detailed article than any Walsh article in *Hobbies*.



This was cut on July 12, 1929 and was among the last Diamond Discs. What was Walsh doing on that day? Perhaps he was at a typewriter writing for *Phonograph Monthly Review*, the first national publication to publish a series of Walsh articles.

A 1947 issue of *The New Yorker* published a Walsh letter debunking the myth that President McKinley made a recording before he was slain on September 6, 1901 (Frank C. Stanley, Len Spencer, and others cut excerpts of the McKinley speech given on September 5, 1901).

He wrote for *Variety* and *Gramophone*. Ben Dulaney reports in the August 1959 issue of *The Commonwealth* that since 1947, Walsh "has been 'official discologist and musicologist' for *Variety*...He reportedly had more copy in that publication's massive fiftieth anniversary edition...than anyone else." Walsh also contributed notes for LPs that reissued vintage recordings. To compile a Walsh bibliography would be difficult since he often used pseudonyms. For at least one *Variety* article—"Edison Site Rally Pulls Old-Record Buffs And Artists," published on October 23, 1974—he used the name "L.S. Burt," which must have led some readers to believe it was written by Edison National Historic Site curator Leah S. Burt. Walsh

sent a copy of the article to correspondent Robert Olson, adding in his hand-writing, "Written by Jim Walsh. I didn't want to use my name since I told in this article of some of the things I had said in my talk." For "Disk Pioneers In Annual Pow [pow-wow?]," published on October 20, 1976 in the *Halifax Gazette-Virginian*, he used the name Addison Dashiell (the full name of record pioneer A.D. Madeira was Addison Dashiell Madeira).

The *Hobbies* Series

His greatest contribution to the field of record research was his long-running series in *Hobbies*, a publication that began in 1931 when three magazines merged. Walsh began his series in the January 1942 issue. "The Coney Island Crowd" was the title for his series, and he explained that this heading "seems appropriate because Victor Black Label [sic] artists years ago fell into the habit of so terming themselves because of a chance remark of a recording official." The series was renamed "Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists" in September. He opens his January 1942 article by stating, "Hobbies' decision to publish articles now and then for collectors of old-time 'popular' records is particularly gratifying to me since I was more or less the pioneer prophet of this now well-established cult."

Before the series, he had written three earlier pieces for *Hobbies*—two letters, one article. The December 1935 issue of *Hobbies* includes a letter in which Walsh urges researchers to take more seriously the work of popular artists: "Musical snobs, of course, will protest scornfully against the assertion [sic], but the truth is that the many men and the fewer women who made [their] reputation[s] as recorders of popular songs and humorous sketches from, say 1895 to 1920, were as brilliant a group as the Red Seal galaxy of the earlier days. If Caruso, Melba and Plancon are immortal, so, in their equally expert way, should be Billy Murray, Ada Jones and Len Spencer. In variety, and in versatility of achievement, these geniuses put the operatic contingent to shame." A

second letter was printed in the June 1935 issue.

The first article written by him for *Hobbies*—"Folk Music Collecting"—appeared in the May 1937 issue but it is not characteristic since Walsh discusses the kind of music that British researcher Cecil Sharp had once investigated in the Blue Ridge mountains region of Virginia. Sharp's example had inspired many others to document the old songs still sung in the 1930s in rural areas of America. Walsh lists other types of "folk music" worthy of documentation—"the negro songs of the far South; the 'steamboat tunes' common along the Mississippi and other large rivers; the cowboy and other pioneer ditties of the far West..." He mentions no recording artists. Nothing more by Walsh appeared in *Hobbies* until he joined as a regular contributor over four years later.

Passion for Recording Pioneers

Many recording artists that Walsh wrote about were ones he had admired when a child. He told reporter Pat Perkinson that he recalled hearing "Night Trip to Buffalo" when he was two and that, by the age of three, he had made friends with a boy whose home had a Victrola, upon which Walsh first heard the piccolo playing of George Schweinfest. In later years he hunted for that same "Night Trip to Buffalo" disc and found it in a second-hand store called Noah's Ark. (It was recorded by various companies—Victor cut a version as early as May 25, 1900.)

Walsh indicates in several articles that his keen admiration for popular recording artists began in childhood. He writes in the September 1956 issue of *Hobbies*, "I have pored over record catalogs since I was six or seven years old." In the February 1954 issue he states, "Most...biographical sketches [in *Hobbies*] have dealt with the 'popular' performers whom I can never sufficiently honor because their recorded work did so much to make my childhood happy." In the November 1952 issue of *Hobbies*, he writes, "[W]hen I was a small boy I imagined I was the owner and operator of the Walsh Talking Machine Company, and that I

started, in a pencil tablet, a catalog that grew to contain several thousand double-faced records. That mythical phonograph company was the greatest pleasure of my life."

In his first *Hobbies* contribution, the letter published in the December 1935 issue, he indicates how long he had been enjoying Billy Murray's artistry: "I have been listening to his records ever since I was six years of age, and can truthfully say that I have never tired of him and each year has deepened my admiration."

Many times he expressed a special fondness for Billy Murray. He writes in the June 1945 issue of *Hobbies*, "Ever since I was six or seven years old [Murray] has been my favorite recording artist and today he is one of my dearest friends." He writes in the June 1942 issue, "As a very small boy I played his records incessantly and he was almost never out of my mind. I even dreamed about him. The greatest evening of my life was the one on which I saw him appear with the Eight [Famous Victor Artists]."

Murray and Walsh became friends during a visit Murray made to Johnson City, Tennessee, in October 1938. In October 1940, Walsh was Murray's houseguest in Freeport, New York, for two weeks and he wrote in the January 1975 issue of *Hobbies*, "I arrived on Friday, October 11, and on the following Monday went to the National Broadcasting Company studios. Walter Scanlan took me into a room where a radio transcription was being made of a program called 'Harlem Quiz'...Walter pointed out Irving Kaufman, who was short, freckled and rather bald, and also showed me Al Bernard." Walsh says in this article that on this trip he saw an ocean for the first time. He did not travel often from his part of Virginia.

He met many record artists. He writes in the April 1964 issue of *Hobbies*, "Mr. [Edwin M.] Whitney, whom I met in Knoxville, Tenn., in 1927, was the first...I ever talked with."

He was frank in articles about which artists and recordings he felt were strong or weak, and his judgements, based on a lifetime of listening, carried weight with devoted readers.

On which singers was Walsh an undisputed authority? An answer is in the June 1945 issue of *Hobbies*. He opens with a question posed to him by others: "Whom do you consider the 10 or 12 most outstanding pioneer recording artists?" "Outstanding" is not defined—in artistic achievement, versatility, influence on other artists, sales? Walsh then lists "The Supreme Fifteen." He does not say that he limited his selection to singers of "popular" material though he names only such artists (neither instrumentalist Vess Ossman nor Victor Red Seal artist Enrico Caruso is listed). He states enigmatically, "Of course, it is understood that personal taste inevitably plays a part in the making of any such selection. However, I have not been seriously guided by my own preferences."

He lists Billy Murray, Henry Burr, Ada Jones, Len Spencer, Arthur Collins, Byron G. Harlan, Harry Macdonough, Albert Campbell, Frank C.



Walsh was well-informed about such Tin Pan Alley craftsmen as lyricist Harry Williams and composer Egbert Van Alstyne. He stated, "'Cheyenne' was one of the most consistent and long-lasting selling Victors that Billy Murray ever made, and I consider it one of the best renditions he ever did." Murray also cut a parody.

Stanley, Steve Porter, Billy Golden, S.H. Dudley, Dan W. Quinn, William F. Hooley, and Cal Stewart. Walsh knew the recordings of these artists better than any other writer.

Walsh as Researcher and Historian

Walsh made excellent use of primary resources—recordings, record catalogs and supplements, interviews with people who had made records decades earlier. When mentioning a song title, composer, record number, or artist's name, he carefully cited correct information. He consulted catalogs and record labels when writing. He announced in the November 1966 issue of *Hobbies* that he was unable to write about recording artists for a time—he wrote on record-related topics—since his catalogs were temporarily unavailable: "More than a year ago I gave my large collection of old record catalogs and other phonograph reference material to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. All these catalogs, books, magazines, etc., have been sent to Washington to be specially bound, then returned to me for my lifetime, after which they will pass permanently into the Library's possession."

In the March 1965 issue of *Hobbies*, Walsh duplicated for the benefit of readers notes he wrote for himself during a Library of Congress visit. He examined rare issues of *The Phonogram*, a publication that promoted new Edison cylinders (Herbert A. Shattuck edited it from 1902 to 1922). It was characteristic of him to study rare material when given an opportunity, make notes of significant findings, and pass along that information to readers.

In other articles Walsh summarized information taken from rarer sources. Published in late 1968 and early 1969 were articles titled "How To Tell When Victor Records Were Made." He wrote the series while examining papers sent to him by the wife of a RCA attorney who rescued the papers as the company discarded them.

Friendships with artists helped Walsh learn about the record industry's early years. He learned

much from Billy Murray (though Walsh admits in the September 1956 issue of *Hobbies* that Murray "was not a student of record catalogs"), Albert C. Campbell, Walter Van Brunt, Frank Banta, and others who had made records earlier in life. By the early 1930s he had corresponded with Byron G. Harlan, John Young, Sam Rous ("S.H. Dudley"), and John S. MacDonald ("Harry Macdonough").

In the early 1930s in *Phonograph Monthly Review* articles, he quotes letters he received from these singers. In the November 1931 issue he states that Harlan "is planning to give a series of

Cheyenne.

Sung by Billy Murray, Orchestra Accompaniment.
Catalogue Number 031317.



Providing commentary for cassettes reissuing Billy Murray performances, Walsh in 1976 called "Cheyenne" a "perfect popular song": "The words and music are so completely wedded to each other that you can't imagine different words to the music or different music to the words. It was the first of the great cowboy song hits."

radio programs, based on the duets which he and Mr. Collins recorded from 1902 to 1924. How is he to obtain these records, so that he may have his old songs recalled to his mind, is puzzling the comedian; and it has just occurred to me that many of the readers of the REVIEW may have such numbers which they will be willing to turn over to him, either as a loan or a gift...I have sent him 33 myself."

He writes in the April 1954 issue of *Hobbies*, "I have written about many artists whom I have met in person. Others were already dead before I wrote concerning them. But there have been still others with whom I corresponded and for whom I formed a deep affection but was never fortunate to greet in the flesh. Frank Crumit was one. And Helen Trix was another."

Writing introductory essays for Ron Dethlefsen's two-volume *Edison Blue Amberol Recordings*, Walsh discussed how he became increasingly interested in the minutiae of the industry. In an unpublished paragraph sent to V78J by Ron Dethlefsen, Walsh lists industry insiders who helped him: "I had become on intimate correspondence terms with several veteran phonograph company officials, of whom Frank Dorian, secretary to W.C. Fuhri, then president of the Columbia Phonograph Company, was especially helpful to me. Others who gave valuable aid were Frank Walker and George Clarence Jell, of the Columbia recording department; John Shearman, an Edison public relations man, and E.C. Forman, a Victor sales manager. They—Mr. Dorian, especially—were untiring in helping me trace the whereabouts of surviving early recording artists and sending me their addresses. It was because of their help that I learned where Dan W. Quinn had a theatrical booking agency in New York City and wrote to him. How thrilled I was when I received a long, handwritten letter from him, addressing me not as 'Dear Mr. Walsh,' but as 'Dear Ulysses!'"

He was most satisfied with his articles when he had access to primary sources on a given topic. He states in the July 1958 issue of *Hobbies*



Commenting about this for a cassette of Murray records, Walsh stated, "This was an English music hall song—very catchy!—and Billy's interpretation seems to be perfect. He also made it for Victor but the Edison is by far the better recording of the two, better sung and better recorded. [It is] as good a record as Billy Murray ever made."

that an early article on Len Spencer, published in the August 1947 issue of *Hobbies*, "was based so largely on third and fourth-hand information that I doubted its being as accurate as I should like...[T]he article [from 1947] stands as perhaps the least trustworthy of any I have published."

When uncertain about facts or unsuccessful in obtaining information that he felt was needed, he announced as much. An excellent researcher, he often cited primary and secondary resources that no previous writers had examined. Anyone who compares Walsh's quotes, paraphrases, and summaries with original source material will find that he was careful with sources when writing for *Hobbies* and other publications.

On his tenth anniversary as a regular *Hobbies* contributor, Walsh made clear to all readers his concern for accuracy. In an article published

in May 1952 and titled "The First Ten Years," he writes, "My knowledge of the early recording days has increased since I began writing for *Hobbies*, and I now know that in past issues I have unintentionally made mistakes...With this in mind, I have recently gone through all my preceding articles, marking any misstatements or other errors. This I have found a valuable lesson in humility...And now, as a prelude to going into the next ten years with clean hands and a clear conscience, I propose to devote my efforts this month to correcting and expiating past 'sins.'"

In one article (January 1971), he corrected an error made nearly three decades earlier concerning pioneer George W. Johnson, and his explanation is noteworthy. Walsh said that he wished to "apologize to the memory of a man to whom I unintentionally did an injustice 26 years ago in *Hobbies* for September 1944." He had repeated in 1944 a claim from Fred Gaisberg's problematic memoir *The Music Goes Round* that Johnson had been hanged for murder. In the 1971 article, Walsh wrote that he had "learned beyond dispute that [Johnson] was not put to death as a common criminal. This article...is to set the record straight. It is my hope and belief that 100, or 200 years from now researchers in the early history of the phonograph will be conning bound volumes of *Hobbies*, and I don't want to pass out of this world knowing that I helped to blacken permanently the name of a presumably innocent man. Hence this act of retribution 26 years after my original statements about Johnson appeared."

He made occasional errors, as we now know because of information published only in recent years. They were often the result of former recording artists mis-remembering events of decades earlier. Walsh's article on countertenor Richard Jose is unreliable because Walsh cited information provided by Jose's widow, who gave a highly romanticized account of her husband's career. But Walsh's mistakes were rarely serious.

He counted among his readers not only collectors of old records but also musicians who had made recordings decades earlier. He gave

credit to all who supplied information, suggestions, and photographs. A few times he allowed others to write in his place for *Hobbies*. But Walsh was proud of his longstanding association with *Hobbies* and prefaced some articles with this warning: "'Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists' is written entirely by Jim Walsh. No unsolicited contributions will be accepted."

He was an excellent researcher but was also unafraid to express views that were unconventional, perhaps even eccentric. He writes in the August 1970 issue of *Hobbies*, "...In my opinion, [Walter] Van Brunt/Scanlan sang the songs associated with Bill Scanlon [William J. Scanlan, famous Irish singer and songwriter] and [Chauncey] Olcott better than Olcott did—or John McCormack, for that matter. I consider him the best of the 'Irish tenors'—and in view of [Van Brunt's] Dutch ancestry perhaps he should be called 'the Dutch Irishman.'" To state that Van Brunt was the best "Irish" tenor—better at singing Irish songs than even John McCormack—is to take a decidedly unorthodox position.

He had an unusually high regard for Al Bernard, stating in the March 1974 issue of *Hobbies*, "I am certain he deserves high rank among the greatest 'popular' recording artists in a 20-year period beginning just after the end of World War I." No other writer has lavished such praise on Bernard, who is now largely forgotten. Expressing admiration for Bernard's blues singing, Walsh states in the May 1974 issue of *Hobbies*, "For years it has been the fashion of collectors who consider themselves 'connoisseurs' of 'blues' and 'spirituals' to sneer at Bernard's interpretations. Their ears, such as they are, tell them that no 'blues' are worth hearing unless they are lugubriously howled, wailed or shrieked by Negro women or, less frequently, intoned by black men. They have a right to their opinions, but I resent their condescendingly superior attitude, and wouldn't give one Bernard record for fifty by Bessie Smith or Ma Rainey." His belief that Bernard was a more accomplished blues singer than Bessie Smith and his suggestion that Smith

"howled, wailed or shrieked" indicate a blind spot on his part or an unfamiliarity with Smith records.

Some Outstanding *Hobbies* Articles

His *Hobbies* articles contain an incredible amount of information about artists and the industry. Most of that information was unavailable to hobbyists prior to Walsh's reporting. Even today, notwithstanding the publication of some books about the industry's early years, many facts about artists can be found only in his articles. The following are representative of Walsh at his best:

1) *History of the Peerless Quartet* (December 1969). As Walsh states in the article's opening, the Peerless Quartet was undoubtedly "the most popular, successful and long lived of all singing organizations that made records." He discusses the quartet's origins, lists significant recordings, and notes personnel changes.

2) *Will F. Denny and Joe Natus* (October & November 1961). The Part II of this series is important for information about two noteworthy recording pioneers but also for a rare 1900 photograph of 42 Edison cylinder record artists, with each artist identified.

3) *A Directory of Pioneer Recording Groups* (October 1962). Labels and catalogs rarely identified singers in ensemble performances, so this list identifying singers in groups is invaluable.

4) *Performers Who Used More Than One Name* (November 1962). Walsh published the first major listing of recording pseudonyms in 1944, but this 1962 list is more complete and accurate. Allan Sutton expands upon Walsh's pioneering efforts in the 1993 Greenwood Press book *A Guide To Pseudonyms On American Records, 1892-1942*.

5) *A Directory of Births and Deaths* (December 1961). Here are years of birth and death for hundreds of popular and classical recording artists,

in many cases with cities of birth and death noted.

6) *A Revised Supplementary List of Birth and Deaths* (July 1962). *Hobbies* readers responded to the 1961 Directory of Births and Death by correcting errors and supplying missing information. Walsh writes, "I hope this list will prove even more useful than the original one. And it may be that in another two or three years I can publish a still more comprehensive one..." But this July 1962 list was the last of its kind.

7) *The (Premier) American Quartet* (February & March 1970). The quartet, with Billy Murray as second tenor, was naturally one of Walsh's favorites. He discusses the complex evolution of this singing group and the best records.

8) *A Matter of Identification* (July 1970). Duplicated is a rare photograph (owned by singer Elliott Shaw) of 20 singers assembled before the door of old Trinity Church in Camden, New Jersey. The group was recording as the Victor Male Chorus, and some individuals are easy to identify, such as tenors Henry Burr, Lewis James and Richard Crooks. Others are difficult to identify, and Walsh explores possibilities, providing interesting analysis. He had even contacted Olive Kline and Wilfred Glenn for their help in identifying their colleagues of decades earlier.

Occasionally he wrote detailed tributes that required several installments in *Hobbies*. Notable are those on Vernon Dalhart (1960), Peter Dawson (1962), and "Six Comediennes" (1963). Walsh wrote to correspondent Robert Olson on November 1, 1960, "The Dalhart series is the most popular I have ever written and has brought me more mail than I can conveniently cope with."

In the 1960s and early 1970s, his articles in *Hobbies* were more substantial than those of the 1940s and 1950s. Although in the first two decades Walsh wrote excellent articles about artists widely admired by collectors of old recordings, he was given a relatively small amount of space, with

SONGS BY DAN QUINN.



Mr. Quinn's reputation as a vocalist is so well established that the mere announcement of his name is a guarantee of the record.

- 5002 McGinty at the Living Pictures.
- 5008 Put Me Off at Buffalo.
- 5011 Arrah, Go On.
- 5048 Pat Malone Forgot He Was Dead.
- 5050 Henrietta.
- 5055 She Always Dressed in Black.
- 5065 Still His Whiskers Grew, (with wind effect.)
- 5081 Nothing Too Good For the Irish.
- 5086 And Then He Woke Up.
- 5097 The Handicap Race, (describing the progress of a horse race, cheers, horses' hoofs, etc.)
- 5098 Chin, Chin, Chinaman, (from "Geisha.")
- 5099 Jack's the Boy, (from "Geisha.")
- 5100 The Amorous Gold Fish, (from "Geisha.")
- 5101 The Interfering Parrot, (from "Geisha.")
- 5104 Then He Whistled Up a Tune, (with whistling chorus.)
- 5116 Dear Little Jappy Jap Jappy, (from "Geisha.")
- 5121 She Never Came Home Till Morning.
- 5131 Mr. Captain Stop the Ship.
- 5136 Since Mary Harris Went to Paris.
- 5138 She Never Did the Same Thing Twice.
- 5150 The Hen and the Door Knob, (from "The Geezer.")
- 5152 Sister Mary Jane's Top Note.
- 5181 Mary Black From Hackensack.
- 5272 She's a Beaut From Bute, Montana.

Walsh was very knowledgeable about artists of the 1890s (the above is from Columbia's 1898 catalog) but did not express great fondness for records of this decade or for artists who were most successful in this period. He most admired artists who enjoyed their heyday from roughly 1903 to 1915—the years of his childhood.

many articles in the 1940s less than a page long. For example, his third installment about Edward Meeker, published in April 1946, is a mere nine paragraphs and takes up less than half a page. By the 1960s his articles were sometimes a full nine pages, with many rare visuals.

By the 1960s Walsh had access to more information about the industry and artists than he had in earlier years, the result of research as well as correspondence with former recording artists and *Hobbies* readers. He had written about Byron G. Harlan in the February and March, 1943 issues of *Hobbies* but could have written a more definitive account of the tenor had he waited two

decades. In recounting his meeting with singer Tiny Tim in the September 1969 issue of *Hobbies*, Walsh writes that he prepared for Tiny Tim "a four- or five-page single-spaced manuscript about Harlan. This I sent to Tim with the information that this was more accurate than my 1943 *Hobbies* articles, which I have found need revision in several respects." However, Walsh never again wrote *Hobbies* articles about Harlan.

Typically three or four months passed between the time that he wrote an article and the time it was published in *Hobbies*. The January 1977 issue of *Hobbies* has Walsh's account, written shortly after the event, of a gathering of collectors at the Edison National Historic Site on October 15, 1976. In the December 1961 issue, which lists years of birth and death for hundreds of popular and classical recording artists, Walsh adds in parenthesis to the Byron G. Harlan entry, "This is being typed on the 100th anniversary of his birth." Harlan was born on August 29, 1861.

Walsh On Edison Technology

Walsh listened carefully to records of all formats—two-minute and four-minute wax cylinders, celluloid cylinders, lateral-cut as well as vertical-cut discs. He was equally familiar with Victor, Columbia, Edison, and Pathé products. Although primarily interested in the lives and careers of artists, he was knowledgeable about talking machine technology and especially admired Edison products. The proud owner of over 3,000 Diamond Discs, he often stated that Edison Diamond Disc technology delivered the finest sound quality. He writes in *Brass Pounders Gossip*, "It is a virtually undisputed fact that the thick Edison records were incomparably the best of their period, and many famous artists have told me that Edison was the only company then able to take down their voices as they actually were."

He contrasts cylinder and Diamond Disc technology in the June 1978 issue of *Hobbies*: "Never had I heard any piano music on an Edison cylinder that was agreeable to my ears. The Blue

Amberol records all had pitch wavers—the veteran recording expert, 'Bill' Hayes, told me, 'We never were able to find a way of making the Amberols run exactly true'—and the fluttery effect caused by the unsteadiness of pitch turns the piano on cylinders into a torment to my nerves. On the wax two-minute cylinders a piano sounded like an out-of-tune banjo. On the Diamond Disc, however, 'Monastery Bells' sounds like perfect piano recording because the pitch is absolutely unvarying. The thickness and solidity of the discs are among the many reasons why they were superior to the cylinders which were dubbed from them."

End of *Hobbies* Series

Despite debilitating illnesses in his last decades, health problems never prevented a Walsh article from reaching his audience since he wrote "stand-by" articles in anticipation of hospital stays.

By 1976, *Hobbies* editors reduced space for

Walsh articles, breaking them into increasingly small installments, which aggravated him. He wrote to correspondent Bob Olson on June 7, 1976, "As a rule, *Hobbies* is now giving me less space than I got five, ten or even twenty or twenty-five years ago, and I certainly don't think it's right in view of my being a contributor of 35 years service...None of its other contributors has been taken into 'Who's Who in America' on the strength of his *Hobbies* writing, and I have obtained more publicity for the magazine than all its other writers combined. However, they have also done many nice things for me, so I go along the best I can."

His last *Hobbies* article appeared in the May 1985 issue (Volume 90, No. 3): "Victor Records of Historical and Personal Interest, Part II." The monthly, renamed *Antiques and Collecting Hobbies*, does not announce that this was his final article. Co-editors Stephen Stroff and Bob Ault briefly took over the column, dropping "Favorite" from the title of the series and renaming it "Pioneer Recording Artists."

No Books Published

In 1930 Walsh announced intentions to compile a book about recording artists, and in the June 1947 issue of *Audio Record*, he again refers to his ambition: "For a considerable time I have been collecting material for a book to be called 'Record Makers,' which will give the life stories of these old timers." He evidently thought seriously about this in the mid-1940s. In the February 1947 issue of *Hobbies*, he describes a visit to John Bieling's home in September 1946 (this would subsequently be named the first John Bieling Day—artists Bieling and Billy Murray spent an afternoon recalling recording days for collectors Walsh, Bryant Burke and Jim Van Demark) and writes about Eugene Rose and Bieling being "much interested in my hope of completing within the next year a book of biographical sketches of artists who made records from 1877 to 1909."

The book never materialized. He may have been warning readers not to expect a book



Several Walsh articles, including one from 1929, refer to this performance cut on December 13, 1921. He believed that on this record, piano music was well-recorded for the first time. He cited this as Diamond Disc technology at its best.

when he wrote in the August 1951 issue of *Hobbies*, "A set of books the size of the Encyclopedia Britannica would be required to publish an exhaustive account of all the American performers who made records at some time from Edison's invention of the phonograph in 1877 to the advent of the electric recording in 1925...When I wake in the middle of the night one of the things I worry about is the disconcerting knowledge that I could turn out an article a month for the next hundred years and still have left artists worth writing about at the end of my century of exertion."

It is regrettable that Walsh never compiled his proposed book, but in magazines from 1928 to 1985 he passed along more information than he could have put in any one book. Moreover, in *Hobbies* Walsh was able to correct errors, combat persistent myths, and present newly discovered information. It was a perfect forum for him.

His articles are not likely to be collected in any book since the cost would be much too high for the small market that today exists for such information. Walsh was often asked by his readers if he planned to compile articles into a single volume. He wrote to correspondent Harold A. Layer on April 23, 1970: "Thousands of persons have asked me to do that, but it is out of the question because I have now written almost three million words for *Hobbies*, and it would take 45 or 50 average size books to contain what I have already written, much less what I hope to go on to writing for many years to come...I have been told that one or two persons have Xeroxed my old articles and sell, or try to sell, them at the exorbitant (to me) price of three dollars an article."

Other Interests and Personal Traits

Anyone interested in learning about Walsh himself will find abundant details in the articles he wrote about artists. A typical case of Walsh relating personal information when writing about records is found in the January 1962 issue of *Hobbies*, which begins his long series on Peter Dawson: "As a lifelong abstainer, I have not tasted

Peter Dawson whisky or any other alcoholic beverage, and never knowingly shall, but I never tire of Dawson's records..."

He was a Dickens authority. Walsh wrote articles about the novelist, owned several first editions as well as some Dickens letters, owned every issue of *The Dickensian* from 1905 onwards, and corresponded with Monica Dickens, a descendant of the novelist. He writes in the September 1969 issue of *Hobbies*, "During all my life, from the time I reached the age of nine, Charles Dickens has been my favorite author. I suppose I must have read each of his books at least three dozen times." Since he never traveled abroad, he never fulfilled an ambition to visit in England places about which the novelist wrote. Other favorite authors were Mark Twain and P.G. Wodehouse.

He loved cats and sometimes while writing articles stopped discussing the subject matter at hand so he could comment on his pets. In the middle of a Chauncey Olcott article, published in *Hobbies* in September 1970, he drops his subject to add a paragraph beginning with this line: "The many *Hobbies* readers who like to receive the latest information about my cats will be interested to know that the two paragraphs just preceding were typed under hardships, because Little Nipper, the 12-year-old patriarch of my feline family...came in while I was writing, jumped into my lap, began biting my fingers..." Cat anecdotes that may have charmed a few readers in Walsh's time make for tedious reading today, and it is surprising that this otherwise highly disciplined writer included observations about his pets in articles about record artists.

Walsh wrote humorous verses and published some under the *nom de plume* Prof. Plum Duff Walsh, Ph.D., the name of his favorite cat. They were published regularly in the early 1970s in *The Old Timer*.

He was frank about his dislike of trends in modern popular music. He concludes his September 1970 *Hobbies* article by stating, "From [song-writer Ernest] Ball to the Beatles has been a tragic plunge downward, I think." This statement goes

undeveloped, which is uncharacteristic of Walsh, who typically supported generalizations with examples and careful analysis. That he was no Beatles fan is less surprising than the fact he offers an opinion. As a historian, he would know that new musical trends often upset members of an older generation. They are rarely fair judges of new trends.

He corresponded with countless admirers of his *Hobbies* articles though ill health and time constraints prevented him from answering all letters. He writes in the July 1962 issue of *Hobbies*, "I'd like to apologize to scores of readers whose letters I haven't been able to answer in recent months. My workaday duties have increased to such an extent that I no longer have time to carry on a regular correspondence with anyone. Not only that, but I have been under doctor's orders for some time to 'slow down' because of a stomach ailment...Many of my good friends...have been waiting more or less patiently half a year or more for me to write to them. Eventually I shall." In 1963 Walsh semi-retired from the newspaper business and finally had additional time to conduct research and write for various publications about old recording artists.

He wrote to Harold Layer on November 7, 1970, "[T]he heat and humidity of last summer virtually put an end to my correspondence activities for a few months. I had hoped to regain some strength when October came, but I haven't, and I still feel extremely weak and tired all the time." He corresponded often with researcher Robert Olson, beginning in 1960, and in a letter dated December 30, 1978, after apologizing for papers being misplaced, Walsh referred to his bedroom as "overflowing with unanswered mail," adding, "Since I had my illness, involving loss of memory last year, I no longer have much interest in records and recording artists, and trying to answer letters of inquiry becomes an increasingly taxing job."

Some collectors today cherish letters sent years ago by Walsh. When he did write, he was a generous correspondent, answering questions thoroughly and passing along rich details about—and memories of—record artists of earlier decades.

The Last Years

Listening to music became increasingly difficult for Walsh, who wrote to Robert Olson on February 25, 1974, "For several years I have been afflicted with imbalance of inner ear fluid that distorts the sound of music and makes listening to records a torment, so I listen as little as possible—mostly in checking details of a record about which I am writing." He added, "My *Hobbies* material is already written and in the editor's possession to run through part of 1976. During the past few months the paper shortage has caused *Hobbies* to reduce the length of my monthly installments, and this worries me." At this time he also suffered from gout as well as edema, or fluid retention in the joints. Within a few years he often suffered a dizziness that prevented him from using a typewriter, and he more and more responded to correspondents by writing on postcards.

In his home on March 11, 1976, he spoke into a microphone about Billy Murray for a project that would result in two cassettes marketed by



His last *Hobbies* article appeared in May 1985. The magazine covered many topics and featured many writers, but nothing in *Hobbies* stands the test of time as well as the Walsh articles.

Merritt F. Malvern, an engineer at Buffalo TV station WBEN. Walsh's commentary between Murray performances is excellent, and one hears a strong Southern accent—what he called, in the December 1950 issue of *Hobbies*, a "corn pone an' 'lasses" Virginia accent.

On October 15, 1976, enthusiasts of vintage recordings gathered at an Edison National Historic Site auditorium for a program. Walsh spoke at the meeting and urged that a Pioneer Recording Artists Hall of Fame be established. According to an article in *Variety* (October 20, 1976—Walsh himself wrote the article, using the pseudonym Addison Dashiell), "He proposed an arrangement similar to, but on a more modest scale, than the National Baseball Museum Hall of Fame at Cooperstown."

In the March 1977 issue of *Hobbies*, he quoted much of his speech, including these sentences: "Perhaps a Pioneer Recording Artists' Hall of Fame could be set up in the Library of Congress, which in course of time will receive my records, record players, reference materials and many hundreds of photographs that now adorn the walls of my creaky old home. Possibly my collection could be used as the basis of a Recording Artists' Hall of Fame...I haven't discussed this with any official of the Edison National Historic Site, but I wonder if the Hall of Fame I suggest could be established here. Of course it should not be restricted to Edison artists."

In 1979 he donated his collection of records and paper items to the Library of Congress. He had made arrangements for the donation as early as 1965. The discs and cylinders were soon added to the institution's record collection, but since no funding was provided for organizing and cataloging the many paper items, they have never been available for examination and evidently will remain inaccessible in the foreseeable future. No researcher has published articles citing Walsh's papers at the Library of Congress. Walsh's own diary, begun in 1940, is presumably at the Library of Congress.

In 1981 he contributed a substantial article

about pioneers (29 printed pages) to Ron Dethlefsen's *Edison Blue Amberol Recordings, Volume II: 1915-1929*. For Volume I of Dethlefsen's set of Blue Amberol books, Walsh had written an introduction of less than a dozen paragraphs. For Volume II, relying on memory due to his collection being at the Library of Congress, he summarized biographical facts and career highlights of artists such as Cal Stewart, Vernon Dalhart, Ada Jones, Walter Van Brunt, and Collins and Harlan.

Writing to Dethlefsen on a postcard dated June 11, 1981, Walsh makes this observation about his own large body of published work: "After lying abed...I decided to defy the intense heat and go through back copies of *Hobbies*, to check my recollections of Collins and Harlan and correct any errors that had crept into the recesses of my so-called mind. It was a tough job, but worth doing. For the first time I realized the immensity of the task I have accomplished in writing about recording artists for the past 40 years."

He spent his last years in nursing homes, beginning with room 314 at the Burrell Nursing Home in Roanoke. John A. Petty visited Walsh here on April 8, 1987 and taped their conversation. Petty noted that the room was bare—no radio, no TV, no machine for playing records, no pictures on walls. On a set of drawers was a lone picture of a cat that Walsh had named Garfield (just before moving into the nursing home, he had found for this cat a new home). A few record collecting magazines had been sent to Walsh by well-wishers but nothing else in the room indicated that he had devoted a life to studying and writing about old recordings. Walsh, who was mentally alert, reminisced about Billy Murray and even sang from memory the tricky lyrics to the comic song "If It Wasn't For The Irish and the Jews."

Jim Walsh died on December 24, 1990 at the Camelot Nursing Home in Salem, Virginia at age 87. He never married and had no immediate survivors, according to an obituary in the January 28, 1991 issue of *Variety*.

Ten Favorite 78s – *By Allan Dodge*

1) **Baby Rose Marie and Orchestra: "Say That You Were Teasing Me" & "Take a Picture of the Moon"** (Victor 22960; recorded 3/10/32). Can a second grader front the 1932 Fletcher Henderson band? While Coleman Hawkins, Rex Stewart et al mind their P's and Q's, the seven year old chanteuse rocks this double-sided hit with authority.

2) **The Waikiki Stonewall Boys: "On The Beach at Waikiki"** (Columbia 1581-D; recorded 5/30/28). This location recording brings forth the mellow blending of the Hawaiian steel guitar, rhythmic uke and laid back vocals of this group of beachboys that hung around on a wall next to the Halekaulani. This beachfront hotel was immortalized in the first Earl Derr Biggers' Charlie Chan mystery, "The House Without a Key." The beachboy spirit of this recording captivated me 28 years ago when I first junked it and it still does!

3) **The Troubadours: "Reaching for the Moon"** (Victor 22613; recorded 12/1/31). The vocalist is Lew Conrad. This frequently recorded Irving Berlin ballad is always a hit with my wife. She can lose patience with Daddy Stovepipe. I chose the

Troubadours' Victor after listening to 13 versions of the song in a friend's collection and I've stuck with it ever since. This arrangement opens with a steel guitar and is bolstered throughout by marimba.

4) **Eddie Lang accompanied by Frank Signorelli: "Add A Little Wiggle"** (Okeh 41134; recorded 3/29/28). The dynamic presence of the guitar and piano on this record is a real testament to the recording quality the Okeh engineers achieved in the late 1920s. I think it favorably competes with the quality of sound reproduction available in any era and on any format. Lang comes on like gangbusters on this Milton Ager composition and the in-your-face feel generated by his guitar on this record dispels those standard myths of poor fidelity scratchy 78s. It's worked for me many times.

5) **Cliff Edwards: "Sing" & "Singing a Song to the Stars"** (Columbia 2235-D; recorded 16/13/30). I'm a nut about Cliff Edwards on both film and record. He can do no wrong. I like both sides of the last record he made for Columbia. Both songs are from MGM movies and, if my memory serves me correctly, "Sing" was filmed as a duet in the movie *Doughboys*, with Cliff and Buster Keaton on a single Martin "taropatch" ukulele. Buster chords with his left hand and Cliff strums with his right.

6) **Dave Appollon and His All String Orchestra: "Mandolin Blues" & "Russian Rag"** (Brunswick 6339). This is a showcase for some of the talents of Russian immigrant Dave Appollon—a popular dancer, vaudevillian, and star of a number of Vitaphone shorts of the early and mid 1930s. "Mandolin Blues" is a series of tour de force solos on guitar and bandura, featuring the mandola and mandolin of Appollon. "Russian Rag" borrows from Rachmanioff's "Prelude in C# Minor." The All String Orchestra, comprised of Philippine nationals, plays this beautifully harmonized rendition and at times sounds like the orchestration of a strange Fellini-esque carousel.



7) **Arthur Fields: "Stay Down Here Where You Belong"** (Columbia A1628; recorded 10/26/14). This anti-war song was written by Irving Berlin during the nation's 1914 isolationist period. I heard it on Tiny Tim's first Reprise album of the late 1960s and was interested in its history. Evidently it proved to be an embarrassment to Berlin in more hawkish times. Groucho Marx frequently threatened to perform it in Berlin's presence and Berlin repeatedly compensated Marx for his silence. I think it's a clever song. There's probably a better 78-era version that I don't know about. *[Editor's note: Henry Burr, the Victor Military Band, and an anonymous baritone on Little Wonder 46 were the only others who recorded it.]*

8) **Proximity String Quartet: "Louise [sic]"** (Columbia 15533-D). "I've a Longing in My Heart for You, Louise" was penned by Frank Harris, author of "After the Ball," some 30 years before these rural stylists regurgitated it on this late 15000. It's a real time warp.

9) **Sara Martin w/ Harry's Happy Four: "Yes Sir That's My Baby"** (Okeh 8262; recorded 11/24/25). Here's an interesting example of a clichéd 1920s pop tune given new dimension when performed by a classic blues contralto. The slow drag gives new vitality to this song.

10) **The Pebbles: "Deep Henderson"** (Victor 20774; recorded 8/6/27). Choosing a last record for a list of favorites is difficult because it excludes everything else in your collection. I think most collectors share my feeling that picking ten unequivocal favorites is impossible and this exercise reflects thoughts of the moment. Anyway, I selected this record because of its perennial presence in the most traveled part of my collection. Aside from a couple of Frank Ferrera's and a Johnny Marvin record, few ukulele solo records seem to have been made in the pre-1935 era. I would be delighted to hear of any others.

Allan Dodge lives in Oakland, California.



A PORTROLA
"My Records Are Inside"

Portrola THE PERFECT
TRADE MARK REG. PORTABLE PHONOGRAPH

Curious Songs From My Dalhart Collection

By Jack Palmer

Vernon Dalhart is my favorite singer. In fact, I am writing a Dalhart biography. For fun, I list here recordings that I think are a little out of the ordinary or are so different from his normal output that they are worth commenting upon.

1. **"A New Kind of Man (With a New Kind of Love For Me)." Edison 51373-L (1924).** This is credited to The Arkansas Trio (Dalhart, Ed Smalle, John Calli). As the title suggests, this was written to be sung by a woman. It was one of those songs that was so popular that even men sang it. Song publishers did not allow lyrics to be changed.

2. **"The Sneeze Song (If You'll Ker-Ker-Chooley Me)." Edison 51605-L (1925).** Credited to Vernon Dalhart and Company, this is a nonsense song of the 1920s. The song's protagonist, Willie, proposes to his girl while sneezing with every other word.



Although the performance was typical for Dalhart by 1927, 52095 is noteworthy for being an early electrically cut Edison release. The lowest catalog number of an electric Diamond Disc is 52089.

3. **"The John T. Scopes Trial." Columbia 15037-D (1925).** Credited to Vernon Dalhart—in other words, the label does not use one of the singer's many pseudonyms (of course, "Vernon Dalhart" is itself a pseudonym). This was recorded before the trial ended. Carson Robison must have composed it based on how he thought the trial would end. The song was released on at least seven other labels. I have found many copies of this song but never one recorded by anyone except Dalhart.

4. **"There's A New Star In Heaven Tonight—Rudolph Valentino." Silvertone 2816-A (1926).** This particular performance was released on seven other labels, and other Dalhart versions were issued on nine additional labels. The singer is identified as Fern Holmes on the Silvertone label. No other labels used this name—or any woman's name. It is obviously Dalhart singing. Why a female name? Whom was this meant to fool?

5. **"We Will Meet At The End Of The Trail (A Tribute to Rudolph Valentino)." Columbia 15107-D (1926).** Also released on seven other labels, this song was supposedly written by Jean Acker, Valentino's ex-wife. Exploiting the tremendous publicity surrounding his death and burial, she implies with the lyrics that she was his only love and they will meet again after her own death.

6. **"A Warning To The Boys"/"A Warning To The Girls." Harmony 729-H (1928).** These two songs were released on two other labels. Dalhart is identified on the Harmony label as Mack Allen. The two comic numbers were originally written over 20 years before by Charley Case, who used them in his vaudeville act. They satirized sad ballads of the day. How Dalhart learned them is not known. Case's name does not appear on the record. Although both songs—they are more like recitations—are humorous, the records apparently did not sell well and are difficult to find today.

7. **"The Frog Song."** Columbia 15306-D (1928). Also released on three other labels, this humorous song performed by Dalhart and Adelyne Hood relates the story of two little frogs and what happened to their relatives, most of whom end up in the frying pan! In between each verse, Adelyne trills and Dalhart sings "KNEE DEEP, KNEE DEEP, VERY DEEP." Both try to sound like frogs.

8. **"River Stay Away From My Door."** Regal MR332 (1931). This was cut in England and is credited to Vernon Dalhart—"baritone"! He recorded it only once, and it was released only in England. Dalhart made eight recordings at this session—his one session outside the U.S.—but only half were issued. The one other Dalhart performance released in England but not in the U.S. is on the other side of the disc: "It's Time To Say Aloha To You," performed by Dalhart and Hood.

9. **"Hoopee Scoopee."** Varsity 5085 (1932). Originally cut for Crown in 1932, this was re-released on Varsity 5085 around 1939. By 1932 Dalhart's career was dying. He cut several nonsense and humorous songs during this session, presumably happy to have any session. "Hoopee Scoopee" is probably the most nonsensical of the bunch. Dalhart is listed as one of the song's writers.

10. **"Lavender Cowboy."** Bluebird B-8229-A (1939). This was one of six tunes recorded in 1939 and released on the Bluebird label with credit given to Vernon Dalhart & his Big Cypress Boys. In a letter written shortly after the songs were cut, Dalhart cited this number as being rather humorous. Certain authorities considered it more risqué than humorous, and it was banned from radio, which killed sales of what I consider the best song of the six. There were no more sessions.



EDITOR'S NOTE: Conducting research for a Dalhart biography, Jack Palmer has uncovered much new information, including a contract signed by Dalhart on April 30, 1917, making the singer exclusive to Thomas A. Edison, Inc. for two years. (The tenor made two Columbia and two Victor records in 1918—he evidently was given special permission.) Although no longer exclusive to the company, Dalhart in the next decade was one of Edison's most prolific artists, cutting over 200 songs for the company. No solo artist, duo, or band had more records issued as Blue Amberols.

The last issue of V78J praised Ron Dethlefson's new book titled *Edison Blue Amberol Recordings, 1912-1914*. Recently he issued a 50 page supplement that is equally well done. For a postpaid copy, send \$10.95 to Dethlefson at 3605 Christmas Tree Lane, Bakersfield CA 93306-1114.

Ten Reasons Why I Collect 78s: Favorites Of Mine

By Frank M. Young

I have collected 78s for a little over five years. My collection is small, but I compensate for quantity with quality. My major interests are 1925-1935 country and ethnic music. I also collect Hawaiian records from the 'teens to the '40s as well as jazz, blues and pop records from the late '20s and early '30s. I've turned up great discs at garage sales and in thrift stores, but I've also lost time plowing through thousands of worthless items. I acquire some records through auctions, but I find this route frequently frustrating. Still, I have the occasional joy of unearthing discs such as the ones listed below—records that compel me to search for more.

1. "Rapsodia (Los Intereses Malcriados), Parte 1 & 2," ORQUESTRA TIPICA MEXICANA "LERDO," Columbia 3378-X (mx. W96904/96905).

Cavernous in its sounds, epic in its conception, this is an unsung masterpiece of Hispanic music. A multi-themed, multi-tempoed, swirling collation of traditional Latino themes and Gershwin-esque tone poetry, "Rapsodia" is my most treasured 78. Miguel Lerdo de Tejada's Orquesta Tipica paints a vivid, atmospheric sound-picture of lurid Mexican landscapes, halting dawns and sultry sunsets. The performance is full of natural echo and reverb—a grandiose wall of sound! The record reminds me of Henry Mancini's score for Orson Welles' 1958 *Touch of Evil*. The opening to Parte 2—an accelerating, heart-racing strain—never fails to thrill me. Many of Lerdo's later discs are dull, but "Rapsodia" is dense, bold, and eccentric.

2. "To Bring You Back To Me"/"Heart Breaking Blues," THREETOBACCO TAGS, Bluebird B-6999.

This group made many discs for Bluebird. Theirs was a typical output of decent string-band numbers, sentimental and religious pieces, dismal novelties, pop tunes. Aside from their hyper-charged "V-8 Blues," this is my favorite of the band's discs. "Heart Breaking Blues" features earnest, discordant harmony singing; adept mando-

lin playing; and fine songwriting on what I presume is a group original. String bands like the Tobacco Tags were becoming passe by the time this record was issued—a gem from a fallow period.

3. "When Summer Comes Along"/"Caliope," THE LEWIS BROTHERS, Victor V-40187 (mx. 55229-2/55230-2). The sounds are so primitive and rough that they shocked me when I first heard them. That rawness, verging on barbarity, I've come to treasure. Dempson and Denmon Lewis recorded four fiddle-guitar duets for Victor in El Paso on July, 11, 1929. I'm not sure which brother was the fiddler, but his performance—crude, lyrical, and impassioned—captivates me. The topside has an almost tormented feel, and I like the way it abruptly ends in mid-phrase.

4. "Bombita Chico (Pasodoble Flamenco)"/"De Mi Tierra (Jota)," RONDALLA ESPANOLA "REY," Columbia 2428-X (mx. W95135/95137). I know nothing about this Hispanic string band except that their interplay and expressiveness are marvelous. The dramatic "Bombita Chico" is longer than normal. The recording runs right up to the edge of the label, with the matrix number stamped mid-label. There is no evidence of a hasty conclusion in the performance. Either all involved were lucky or the group had the arrangement timed perfectly. The sprightly "De Mi Tierra" features gleeful cries from the musicians.

5. "Kane's Blues"/"Hula Girl," KANE'S HAWAIIANS, Victor 20701 (mx. 269-4/277-3).

Both sides are labeled "Instrumental" but "Hula Girl" features a vocal refrain. "Kane's Blues" makes this disc a keeper. It's not a blues but a charming rag that varies in tempo and technique. The group's steel guitarist has a curious but formidable style. There is mischievous humor in his performance. This is one of my "show-off" records since it never fails to surprise and amuse other listeners.



6. **"Big Ball Uptown"/"Sweet Rose of Heaven," TAYLOR-GRIGGS LOUISIANA MELODY MAKERS, Victor 21768 (mx. 47021/47022).** The label's generic description—"Dance orchestra with vocal refrain"—technically fits this group, whose sound is similar to other string-bands of the era (E.E. Hack's String Band, for example), but a loping, hypnotic, laid-back gait distinguishes the Melody Makers. The bowed bass-fiddle of Ausie Griggs blends with the raspy, bucolic fiddles of Foster Taylor and Robert Griggs to create a striking sound. The searing bass tones of this 1928 disc aptly display Victor's state-of-the-art recording technology.

7. **"I'm Gonna Move Further Down the Road"/"Rise and Shine on the Dummy Line," ROBERT N. PAGE, Victor 21067 (mx. 39817-2/39818-2).** The guitar-playing tenor waxed only these two sides. He sounds nervous, even terrified, for the brief duration of his stint as a Victor recording artist. His tempo drags, and his laconic voice frequently goes off-key. Page's performance fascinates me, as do his two original tunes. The topside is a vivid aggregate of random blues couplets; the flip is a witty ridin'-the-rails tune with a catchy chorus. This disc typifies the mystery-aspect of record collecting. I wonder who this person was and what happened to him.

8. **"Wheel in a Wheel"/"Oh! Yes," WHEAT STREET FEMALE QUARTET, Columbia 15021-D; also issued as Harmony 5151-H (mx. W140300/140301).** The eeriest record I've found. This a capella group performs a pair of mystifying spirituals. I do not know whether the group is black or white. Each woman's voice is distinct and unusual. My favorite of the foursome is a raspy, deep voice—almost a baritone! It conjures a mental image of Wallace Beery in drag. Quartet members trade lines back and forth, and their harmony singing has the effect of a half-remembered dream. The performers apparently made this one acoustic record and vanished into obscurity.

9. **Two records by THE CORLEY FAMILY, Columbia 15495-D and 15574-D (mx. W149518/149521).** Nolan Porterfield has cited this group's "Give the World A Smile" as a favorite. Such enthusiasm put a bee in my bonnet to find a copy. Porterfield wondered if the group made any other records. Yes, Nolan, they did. Columbia 15495-D pairs "He Keeps My Soul" and "When Jesus Comes." All four performances feature wonderful singing, with eccentric call-and-response vocals. These are true family efforts. The voices range from a young child's to an adult's baritone. They blend together in joyous harmony. I hope to find a better copy of "Give the World A Smile." Its flipside, "On My Way to Glory Land," has a nasty scratch that too many plays have aggravated.

10. **"Tu Recuerdos"/"Apra De Oro," FRANCISCO SALINAS, Columbia 2632-X (mx. 95446/95498).** Guitarist Salinas renders a pair of beautiful tunes written by his mentor, Guillermo Gomez. "Tu Recuerdos" evokes memories and emotions as only music can. The performance and arrangement here bring to mind Eddie Lang's equally melancholy and unforgettable 1927 performance of "Prelude." Did Salinas influence Lang? I have found three mint copies of this record but would love to hear other Salinas performances. He must have made others, which I judge by the jump in matrix numbers.

Ten Records That Were Favorites When I Was A Child

By Bob Olson

During the depression my Dad raised cows and chickens, supplementing his WPA income by selling milk and eggs. Knowing my interest in records, he traded produce to a friend for a Victrola and stack of records. So in 1935, at the age of 7, I became the proud possessor of a record collection, which has grown to 4,500 78s. I played with discs on the floor. They had no sleeves, so you can imagine what the ones from my boyhood look like now. I have acquired better copies of most of them but kept the originals for nostalgia sake. The following are ones I remember especially liking, and I share my childhood memories of them:

1) **Columbia A-835. Frank Coombs, Counter Tenor: "Nelly Was A Lady"/"Silver Threads Among The Gold."** As a boy, I could not understand why a man would want to sing like a lady, but I pretty well memorized the words.

2) **Columbia A-1315. Henry Burr: "The Trail Of The Lonesome Pine" (with Albert Campbell)/"A Little Bunch Of Shamrocks" (with Edgar Stoddard).** This was my introduction to Henry Burr, and I have many of his records now. I especially liked "The Trail Of The Lonesome Pine."

3) **Victor 17850. Conway's Band: "Flirting Whistler"/"Ragging The Scale."** This is about the only instrumental record I remember, but I memorized a lot of the music, making up my own words for parts of it.

4) **Columbia 916-D. Frank Harris (Irving Kaufman): "I've Never Seen A Straight Banana" (with Ed Smalle & The Columbians)/"Following You Around" (with The Knickerbockers).** I never knew until 30 years later that Harris was really Irving Kaufman. I really liked "Straight Banana" and even made up words for some of the orchestra parts. I have never been able to replace this so I still play my original copy.

5) **Columbia 749-D. Ford and Glenn: "I'd Love To Call You My Sweetheart"/"Mary Lou."** My grandpa and grandma lived in the hills and had a stack of records under the bed that I finally was able to get from them. This was from that stack. I enjoy singing the "Sweetheart" side to my wife.

6) **Victor 20539. Vernon Dalhart and Carson Robison: "My Blue Ridge Mountain Home"/"Golden Slippers."** One of my prized possessions, this originally belonged to good friends who lived next door. One day one of the girls broke my Pathé record of "Dizzy Fingers." Her mother told me to pick one of their discs to take its place, and I didn't hesitate in taking this one. Even today this would take its place in my Top Ten.

7) **Columbia 15034-D. Al Craver (Vernon Dalhart): "The Wreck Of The 1256"/"Rovin' Gambler."** Another one I loved though it had a number of gouges in it. I still have it but also have an almost mint copy to play. For 25 years I had no idea that Al Craver was really Vernon Dalhart.



Cited in Olson's list of three 78s that broke long ago—good ones that he was later glad to replace.



EDITOR'S NOTE: Bob Olson was able to help when I wanted to date Montgomery Ward discs. The above was listed only in Ward's Fall 1936 catalog. These are electric takes. Some acoustical Victor matrixes were also used for the Ward label.

8) **Columbia 1488-D. Vernon Dalhart: "The Bum Song"/"Hallelujah I'm A Bum."** As Jim Walsh wrote in *Hobbies*, Dalhart had a tired sound in his voice on this. I never could figure how the man credited with singing these could be the same one who sings "My Blue Ridge Mountain Home"—they never sounded alike to me. These last three discs inspired in me an attraction for Dalhart records that continues to this day. I now have 880 of them.

9) **Brunswick 136. John & Emery McClung (The McClung Brothers): "It's A Long Way To Tipperary"/"When You Wore A Tulip And I Wore A Big Red Rose."** It seemed odd to me that two people with raw hillbilly voices were singing tunes about Ireland and about a tulip and a rose.

10) **Victor 23586. Radio Mac (Harry McClintock): "He Sure Can Play A Harmoniky"/"His Parents Haven't Seen Him Since."** My aunt gave me this record, with two large cracks and a hunk out of it that took out the first verses on both sides. I memorized all the catches in the record. I longed to learn the first verses but did not hear them until 30 years later when I got a tape copy. I finally won a store stock copy of the record in an auction.

THREE 78s I JUST HAD TO REPLACE

It was not until I was an adult and began collecting old records again in the 1950s that I was able to replace the following three discs that meant a lot to me as a child. A young boy's heart was about shattered when the records were broken long ago.

1) **Brunswick 169. Lester McFarland and Robert A. Gardner: "The East Bound Train"/"The Bright Sherman Valley."** I had this in a stack in a closet and a friend stepped on it when we were playing hide and seek. Only the last few grooves were left. My younger brother to this day remembers the words that remained on the playing surface.

2) **Brunswick 123. Vernon Dalhart: "Get Away Old Man Get Away"/"Pretty Little Dear."** I don't remember how this broke, but it was one of my favorites. We had to throw the record away.

3) **Victor 21704. Mac (Harry McClintock): "Big Rock Candy Mountain"/"Bum Song No. 2."** I was holding this disc, ready to put it on the Victrola, when it fell out of my hands. I really cried over this one.

Sorting Out Puritan

An investigation of Paramount's sister label

By Allan Sutton

Sometimes regarded as a homely stepsister to the more glamorous Paramount, Puritan was truly a label with multiple personalities, and its various configurations have long puzzled collectors. The confusion stems in part from the fact that Puritan for several years was produced by two separate companies—the New York Recording laboratories and the Bridgeport Die and Machine Company—that were not always successful in coordinating their production.

Paramount, Puritan, and the United Phonographs Corporation

Puritan was registered as a trademark nearly a year before Paramount, by the United Phonographs Corporation of Sheboygan and Port Washington, Wisconsin. An apparent subsidiary of the Wisconsin Chair Company and sister corporation to Wisconsin Chair's New York Recording Laboratories, United Phonographs filed a trademark application for its Puritan brand from Port Washington on January 5, 1917, claiming use of the trademark for both phonographs and records since October 1, 1916. Despite that claim, the earliest known mention of the brand occurs in the *Talking Machine World* is May 1918.

Perhaps even more surprising is the fact that the United Phonographs Corporation—not the New York Recording Laboratories—filed the first trademark application on the Paramount brand on November 5, 1917, claiming use on records and machines from October 20 of that year. Nevertheless, when the Paramount label was launched on a

small scale in late 1917, it was clearly credited to NYRL, not United Phonographs.

Puritan phonographs were high-priced, bulbous-sided floor models fitted with an odd saxophone-shaped horn that wrapped around the record-storage bin and opened close to floor level. Although touted as "The Long-Horn Sensation of the Phonograph Industry," these bulky machines produced surprisingly anemic sound, and public reaction seems to have been lukewarm. A news brief in the August 15, 1919 issue of *The Talking Machine World* noted that one Charles Orth placed 1,000 Puritan billboards along 175 miles of highway in Milwaukee County. Judging from the relative scarcity of Puritan products, his efforts were less than cost-effective. In the early 1920s, Puritan machines were also sold under several custom and department brand names, including J.L. Hudson (Detroit).

The earliest known mention of Puritan records appeared in a Puritan phonograph advertisement in the *Talking Machine World* for May 15, 1918, a short time after the introduction of the Paramount label from which it was derived. Like Paramount, the earliest known Puritan releases were nine-inch vertical cut releases, and couplings and catalog numbers were identical to the corresponding Paramount issues. The labels, in blue, black, and gold on light gray, depicted a pseudo-colonial interior in which a woman clad in Pilgrim-type garb faces a jarringly anachronistic floor-model phonograph. The records originally sold for 65¢ each.

Following in step with Paramount, Puritan converted to lateral-cut issues in late 1919, and a



NYRL's Puritan (*left*) survived through mid-1927, although many issues seem to have sold poorly and are rare today. BD&M's version (*right*) did not survive the Bridgeport company's bankruptcy in mid-1925.

December 1919 *Talking Machine World* ad boasted, "Puritan lateral-cut records are brilliant and contain the latest numbers." The earliest lateral issues bore redesigned three-color labels with elaborate scrollwork borders and duplicated Paramount's lateral-cut releases. The United Phonographs version of the label underwent several changes in design, color scheme, and pictorial trademark before disappearing in late 1921.

The brief disappearance of Puritan in late 1921 seems to coincide with the apparent demise of the United Phonographs Corporation, which from the start had seemed to be a redundant entity within the Wisconsin Chair organization.

BD&M's "East-Coast" Puritan

On March 1, 1922, the Bridgeport Die and Machine Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut—an independent pressing plant—announced a new series of Puritan records. BD&M had originally copper-plated Paramount masters for the New York Recording Laboratories, and in late 1921 or early 1922 the company arranged to press NYRL masters under a variety of department-store and mail-order labels. Unlike the earlier Puritan label, which was

priced identically to Paramount, BD&M's records would sell for 50¢ each and were aimed at the popular mid-price market to which Emerson's Regal brand was catering so successfully.

Under BD&M's agreement with NYRL, BD&M would produce its 50¢ Puritan discs for distribution east of the Ohio River and north of the Potomac, while NYRL would produce the same label, at the premium-price 75¢ level, for distribution elsewhere.

BD&M's Puritan label bore no resemblance to previous designs. Depicting a rather dour-looking pilgrim in profile, the 50¢ Puritan became the flagship label in an extensive line of BD&M brands that came to include Belvedere, Chautauqua, Hudson, Puretone, Resona, and Triangle. Early BD&M products derived their couplings and catalog numbers from Paramount (*i.e.*, Puritan 11227 = Paramount 20227).

NYRL and BD&M attempted to match each other's couplings and catalog numbers but didn't always succeed, resulting in alternate versions of some early Puritan releases. The situation improved for a time in 1923, after BD&M adopted NYRL's label design, and the two plants seem to have correlated their production more closely.

Puritan Record

LATERAL CUT
Plays on Any Disc Phonograph

LAU & REYNOLDS
DRY GOODS, NOTIONS & MORE
EAST BURLINGAME
THE HOME OF QUALITY

**THE NEW YORK RECORDING LABORATORIES, INC.,
PORT WASHINGTON, WIS.
MAKERS OF PURITAN PHONOGRAPHS AND RECORDS**

By the mid-1920s, the United Phonographs Corporation had vanished, and production of Puritan products—phonographs and records alike—was credited to the New York Recording Laboratories.

BD&M also produced a special Puritan series for the Co-Operative Record Company, which marketed its products through mail-order offers in *Judge* and other popular magazines. The Co-Operative series drew on the same material as standard Puritan releases but used different couplings. In an apparent cost-savings move, BD&M simply affixed existing labels showing the original issue numbers to the discs. As a result, the Co-Operative issues often show different catalog numbers (usually with the -A and -B side designations still appended) on each side, a source of confusion to discographers for many years.

Although Puritan initially drew almost exclusively

on NYRL's Paramount masters, BD&M began to press masters from other sources, including the Emerson Recording Laboratories—which at the time was producing masters for its own Emerson label as well as the Grey Gull group, Clover, Dandy, and other low-priced brands—in 1924. By late 1924, BD&M seems to have lost its rights to the brand, and by mid-1925 the Bridgeport company was bankrupt.

NYRL's Later Puritan Label

While BD&M produced Puritan for distribution in the Northeast, NYRL continued to manufacture its own higher-priced version of the label at the

Grafton, Wisconsin plant for sale in the South and Midwest. Although initially featuring the same material as its eastern counterpart, NYRL's Puritan label used a grapevine motif and substituted the legend "America's Best Record" for BD&M's pilgrim trademark.

With BD&M's increasing use of Emerson masters in late 1924 and the collapse of BD&M in 1925, Puritan was once more exclusively an NYRL product, and for two years it would offer a smattering of material from Paramount's race-record catalog. But after NYRL closed its New York studio in 1926, Puritan drew increasingly on ordinary pop tunes and dance numbers from the Regal Record Company (Banner), and the label was finally discontinued in mid-1927 after several years of poor sales.

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The Bridgeport Die & Machine Company

Founded in 1912, the Bridgeport Die & Machine (170–174 Elm Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut) entered the record business after World War I, when it copper-plated masters for the New York Recording Laboratories (Paramount). By April 1921, the company had installed its own record presses and was actively soliciting pressing business under the direction of president James W. Ogden. In early 1922, the company arranged to lease NYRL's Paramount masters for its own labels and on March 1 of that year announced its new series of Puritan discs. An October 1921 *Talking Machine World* article noted that the factory was operating 60 hours per week pressing 6-inch and 10-inch discs.

By early 1923, BD&M was producing a string of labels for department stores and mail-order firms, pressed primarily from NYRL masters and generally using couplings and catalog numbers

identical to Puritan's. Among the labels known to have been pressed by BD&M are Baldwin, Belvedere, Broadway, Carnival, Chautauqua, Everybody's, Hudson, Kiddie Rekord (for Victor Emerson), Lyraphone, Mitchell, Music Box, National, Pennington, Puretone, Resona, Supertone, Triangle, and Up-To-Date. BD&M at first produced a smooth, high-quality, slightly oversized disc, but quality declined markedly in later pressings.

In late 1924, BD&M switched to the Emerson Recording Laboratories as its primary master supplier, drawing on material from the Dandy/Emerson/Grey Gull pool. A short-lived series of BD&M's own masters, beginning at BDM-1 and possibly recorded for them by ERL, appeared in 1924.

The company declared bankruptcy in July 1925, but several of its labels were taken over by other manufacturers.

Victor's Spring-Balanced Lid Supports

By Ron Pendergraft

Many Orthophonic Victrolas have lid support systems—either pneumatic or spring-based—that were designed so lids will close slowly and without guided assistance from machine owners. The spring-balanced lid support system was probably a cheap alternative to the more complicated pneumatic system. Whereas I find that the pneumatic systems work very well on my machines, the spring lid system on my Victrola 8-4, which is the only machine I own with this type of mechanism, has never operated as Victor literature says it should. Having examined it closely, I share some observations here.

Robert W. Baumbach's *Look For The Dog* lists at least 16 Victor models of the mid to late 1920s with a spring assisted (as opposed to pneumatic) lid device: Consolette (4-3), Granada (4-4), 4-7, 4-20, 4-40, 7-3, 7-10, 7-25, 8-4, 8-9, 8-12, 8-35, Florenza (9-1), 9-15, 9-25, and 12-15. Other models may have a spring supported lid, and possibly not all specimens of the 16 models listed here have spring lids. For example, my 4-7 and Granada machines do not have this device but instead use the standard lid support that requires two hands for the lid to be closed.

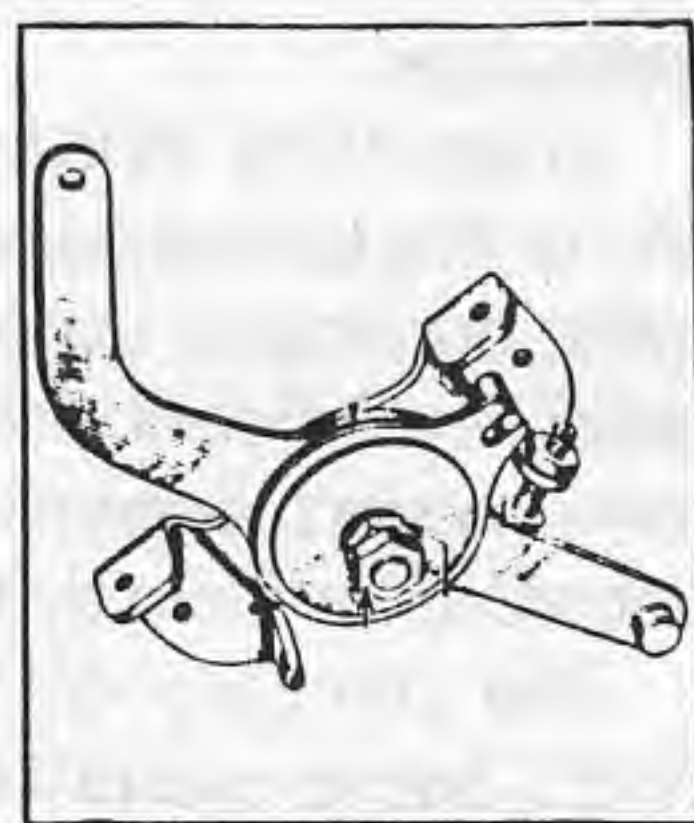
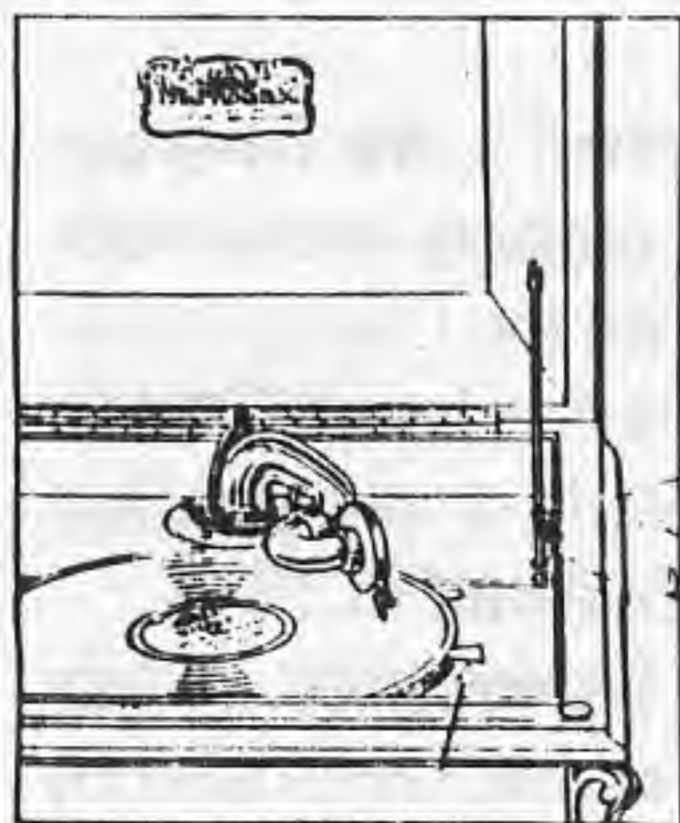
Victor's spring-balanced lid support system is a friction-type brace that uses a tension spring to allow the lid to drop slowly, using the weight of

the lid. At times I drop the lid of my 8-4 and the lid closes by itself with a small "thump." That is more or less how it is supposed to work though literature implies that it should close quietly (lids on my machines with pneumatic systems do close noiselessly). But the lid of my 8-4 usually needs to be guided before it will close all the way, which is not what Victor engineers intended.

Eager to adjust the system so the lid would regularly close all the way without extra guidance from me, I turned to Victor literature but found that it was not helpful. In fact, I had difficulty reaching the mechanism when following Victor's instructions. I could make adjustments only by removing the machine's back cover—not a step mentioned by Victor literature. Regrettably, room temperatures seem to influence the device's performance. If I adjust the device to work well during a given temperature, it seems to be out of adjustment again in no time.

This is how Victor literature describes how to adjust supports: "The lid support of the spring type permits the lid to drop slowly after being released from the catch. The lid should close quietly, but, if it does not, the lid support may require adjustment. After removing the motor board by taking out the corner screws, the adjustment should be made as follows: 1st—If the lid falls too quickly loosen lock nut 'A' and turn the adjusting nut 'B' slightly. Then tighten the lock nut. 2nd—If the lid closes too slowly remove the friction disc 'C' and distribute grease over its surface. Push the lever arm over far enough so that grease can be distributed over the surface of the other friction plate. Replace the parts, and adjust the nut 'B' until proper support is obtained."

I was at first puzzled by Victor's use of the term "catch" since the lid of my 8-4 is held in place by friction, not a catch. But I know that Victor engineers constantly modified parts in an effort to improve machines, so the parts we find on our



Lid Support

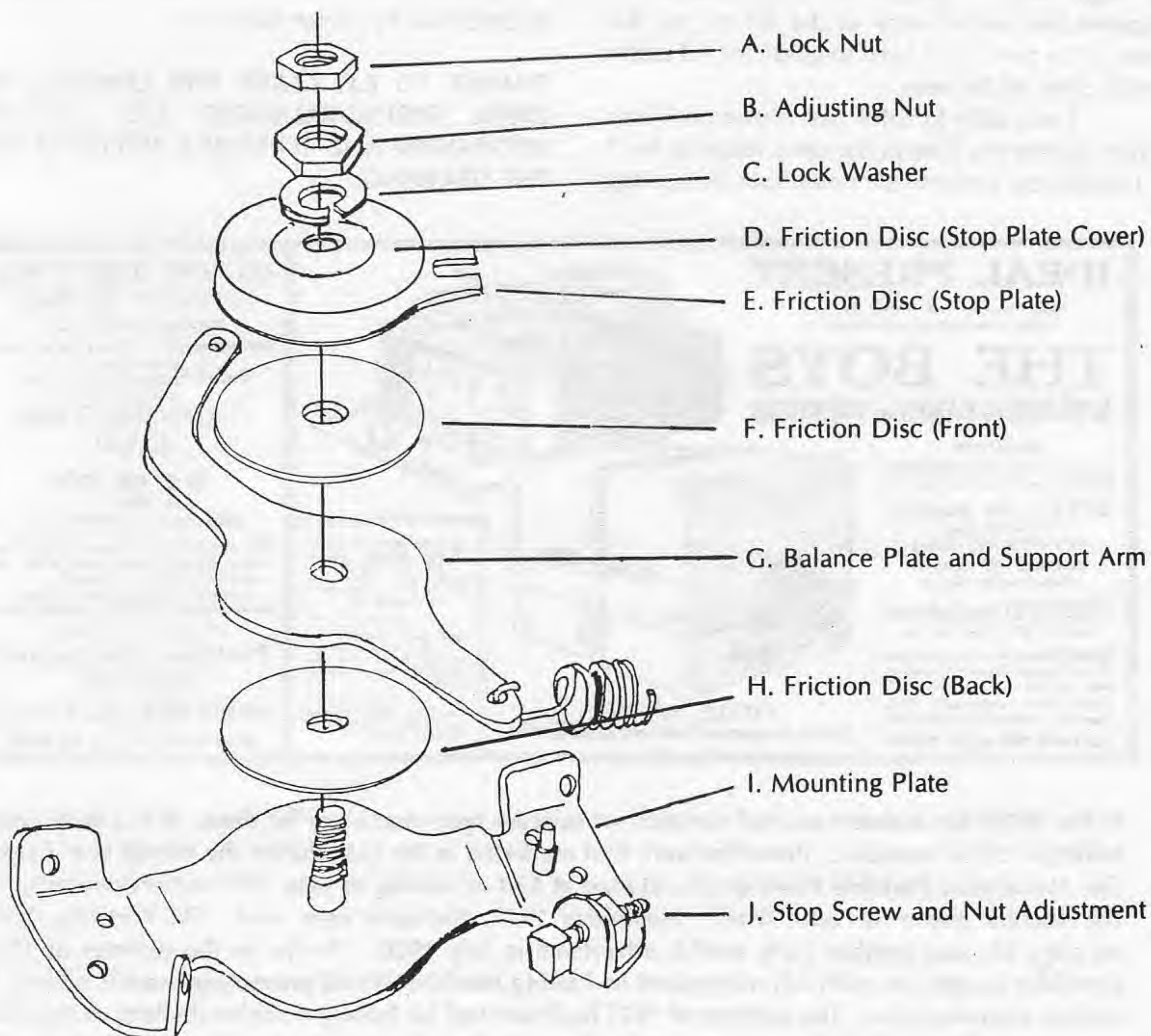
machines sometimes differ from what is described in Victor literature. The reference to a "catch" makes me think that some spring assisted lids do have a catch, probably similar to the ball bearing catch on pneumatic lid support tubes.

These are the main parts of the support mechanism on my 8-4:

- lock nut
- adjusting nut

- lock washer
- friction disc stop plate cover
- fiction disc stop plate
- front friction disc
- balance plate and support arm
- back friction disc
- mounting plate
- stop screw and nut

On some models the lock washer and stop plate



cover may have been replaced with a "five-leaf clover" style washer.

The spring, which is attached to the end of the balance plate, has two functions: it assists in the lifting of the lid and also slows the rate at which the lid falls. Some models have an adjustment screw that may help with weak springs. The springs in machines today are several decades old and have naturally lost some resiliency. Replacing springs may help improve performance, but I do not believe the system was an especially good one to begin with. Despite my determination to improve the performance of the lid on my 8-4, most of the time I still need to guide the lid before it will close all the way.

I was able to solve two minor problems. When playing my flute in the same room as the 8-4, I could hear sympathetic notes from the springs,

which was distracting. Do other Victrola owners hear something similar when playing a musical instrument? Also, when I let the lid close with a bump, the springs vibrated (naturally, as they are under tension), causing a ringing sound. By placing a small amount of felt around the lower end of each spring (the felt is held in place by paper clips), I stopped the vibrations that were caused by my flute, and the lid did not make so much noise when closing.

Have any collectors adjusted spring-balanced lid support systems so the lids consistently operate as described by Victor literature?

THANKS TO E.F. CLARK FOR LOANING AN EXTRA SPRING-BALANCED LID SUPPORT MECHANISM AND TO NOEL L. WILLIAMS FOR THE DRAWING.

IDEAL PRESENT
from relatives and friends to give
healthy entertainment and pleasure to

THE BOYS
In TRAINING CAMPS or TRENCHES

DESCRIPTION
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Packed in Case
12½ x 12½ x 6¾ inches

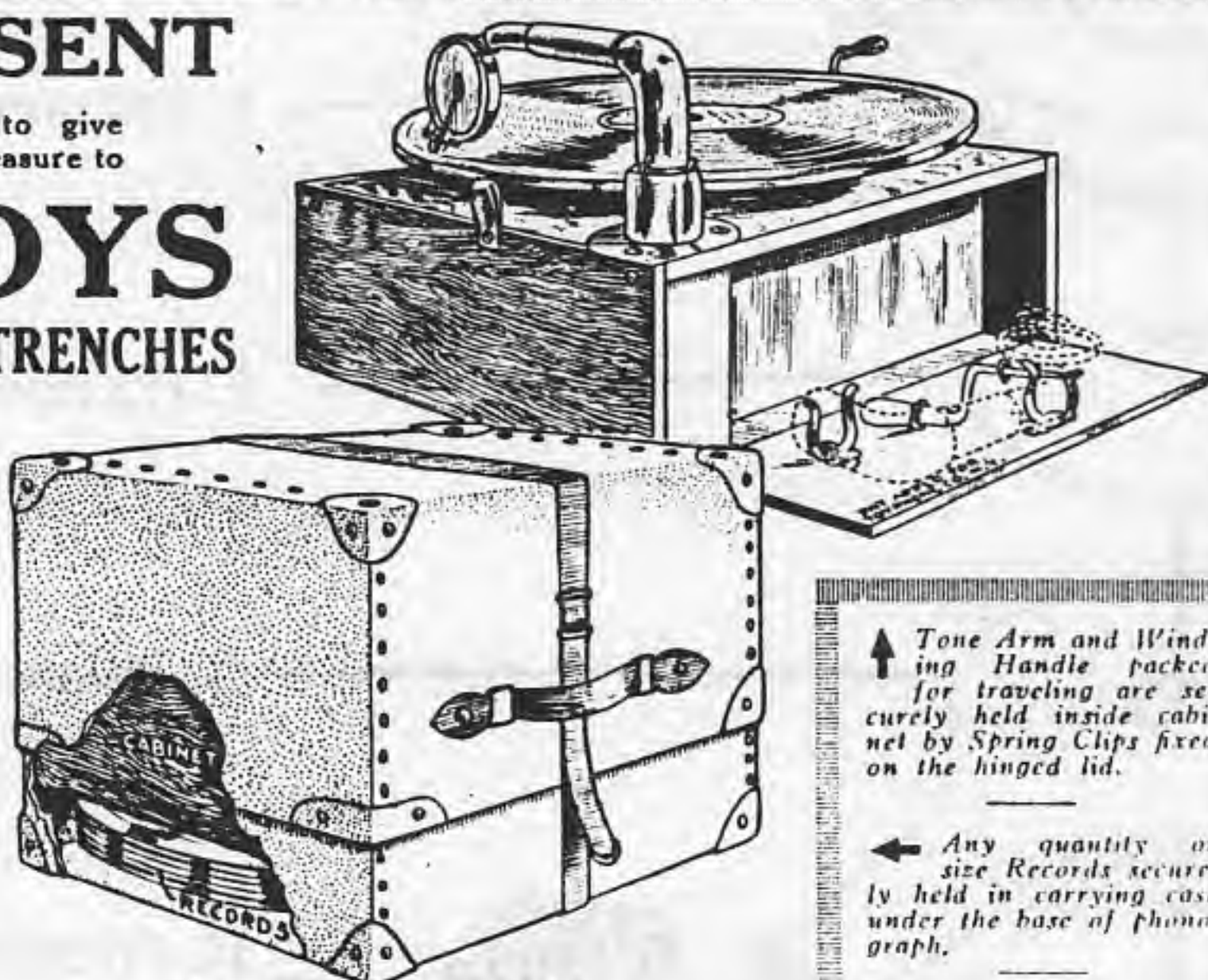
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WEIGHT: the lightest
Complete with Case, 12½ lbs.

Motor Guaranteed to play two
10-inch or one 12-inch Record at
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Tone Arm (Universal) Plays
Lateral or Hilland Dale Records

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COMPLETE IN CARRYING CASE
We absolutely guarantee from the
Little Marvel pure tone with an
enormous volume of sound.
(Like from high priced Floor Cabinets)

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Mfg. Co.**
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Patents applied for U. S. A. and Abroad

↑ Tone Arm and Winding Handle packed for traveling are securely held inside cabinet by Spring Clips fixed on the hinged lid.

← Any quantity or size Records securely held in carrying case under the base of phonograph.

Carrying Case expands according to quantity of Records carried.

In the 1920s the industry pushed portable—or suitcase type—machines for discs. It is a story worth telling in detail someday. Portables were first marketed in the U.S. during the World War I years. The Melophone Portable Phonograph retailed at \$30 according to May 1917 advertisements, and the machine above was advertised in November 1917. But sales were weak. The Portrola, shown on page 61, was another early model, advertised in July 1920. Finally, in the summer of 1922, portables caught on, with advertisements in *Talking Machine World* promoting models offered by various manufacturers. The summer of 1921 had been bad for talking machine dealers, so portables were pushed heavily in the summer of 1922. It was the industry's solution to sluggish summer sales.

NEW BOOK: The Red Nichols Story-- After Intermission, 1942-1965

By Philip R. Evans, Stanley Hester, Stephen Hester, and Linda Evans
Scarecrow Press, Inc. (ISBN 0-8108-3096-5)

Reviewed by Tim Gracyk

This interesting book lists all known recordings, broadcasts, and live performances of jazz musician Red Nichols, working either as a sideman or band leader, from 1944 until his death in 1965. Nichols had worked continuously as a musician from the early 1920s to April 1942. He then did defense work for the Pacific Bridge Company in Oakland, California, having no professional musical engagements for nearly two years. This is the "intermission" referred to in this book's subtitle.

The Paramount movie *The Five Pennies*, released in the spring of 1959, dramatizes that break in the career, and anyone who has seen the film will easily recall scenes of Nichols, played by Danny Kaye, in a shipyard. The film is based loosely on Nichols' life—too loosely. The musician's daughter, Dorothy Nichols Mason, is quoted in the book's early pages, and she identifies what in the film is realistic and what is fiction. Author Steve Hester later identifies other bits of "misinformation." The movie is shown often on cable TV's so-called classic movie channels, and I have seen it twice recently, enjoying it only because I had this book in hand. I knew when to shout, "That never really happened!"

Dorothy is quoted elsewhere, and letters of Nichols' friends and fellow musicians are quoted throughout the book, so the text does more than lists dates and songs. The personality of Nichols comes through.

The first engagement listed by the book was in February 1944, Nichols having joined Glen Gray's Casa Loma Orchestra. He was immediately making records again, Glen Gray at this time being a Decca artist. The book establishes that Nichols worked very hard—so many radio broadcasts, record sessions, club engagements, and concert

events! *The Five Pennies* does stress that the lives of professional musicians are not easy ones. It is something that the movie gets right.

Consider activities listed for February 12, 1953. Red Nichols and His Five Pennies opened at the Hangover Club in San Francisco, yet Nichols was on radio as one of the musicians in John Scott Trotter's Orchestra on the *General Electric Show Starring Bing Crosby*—produced in Palm Springs, far from San Francisco! That show, along with the show broadcast on February 19, had been transcribed weeks earlier, on January 31. He was in Hollywood on February 6 to play in the Walter Sharf Orchestra for the *Phil Harris and Alice Faye Show*, broadcast on February 15. On February 7 he was back in Palm Springs for another Crosby radio show, broadcast on February 26. He worked



A Decca product of 1943, reissued during the Petrillo ban on recording. At the time Nichols was taking a break from musical engagements.

regularly for radio shows but rarely as a featured performer. In orchestras, he was usually just another musician skilled at sight-reading. He was a star performer—a big name—on radio in his pre-"Intermission" heyday.

He traveled to wherever the jobs were, and the book cites what Nichols earned for engagements. For working ten weeks in mid-1944 as a Glen Gray Orchestra member at New York City's Cafe Rogue he received \$1,750—not bad! Earning so much so quickly, Nichols must have hesitated leaving Glen Gray, but at this point he did leave and the pay thereafter was not always impressive. For a one-nighter at Casino Gardens, Ocean Park, California in mid-February 1945 he was paid \$15.50. He received \$695 for working two months of early 1945 at Topsy's in South Gate, California. And so on.

The book accomplishes superbly what it sets out to do, giving in 746 pages everything you may wish to know about the late career of Red Nichols. If you met Nichols during this period, you may have special memories of some dates and activities listed here.

Sadly, the second half of Nichols' long career was less interesting than the first half, his contribution to recorded jazz from 1944 until his death being inconsequential. That is not a criticism of this book but rather my conclusion after examining what is listed in the book while listening to records made late in Nichols' career. I suppose I am lucky to own so many of the 78s and LPs from his late career since I believe none sold well (I have found no duplicate copies). The late records did not exert much influence on other artists. This is in contrast to Nichols being a seminal figure in the 1920s and slightly beyond, when he was the right man with the right talent for the time.

In the book's Foreword, Elwood ("Woody") B. Backensto reminds readers of Nichols' success in the 1920s, stating, "In 1927, Red's Pennies recorded 'Ida,' which became Brunswick's first million seller..." Backensto was important to this book's development since his research notes had been donated to the four authors.

It is just as well that Backensto himself did not write the book since his Foreword has problematic statements. For example, how does Backensto know that a million copies of Brunswick 3626 were sold, and how does he know that no earlier Brunswick discs had? The four authors of the book—the Hesters and the Evans—wisely make no such guesses at sales figures.

By the 1940s big bands as well as bebop artists made Nichols' style seem outdated. One important reaction against big bands and bebop was new interest in the roots of jazz, with many jazz fans creating a market for the music as it once sounded. In his post-"Intermission" days, Nichols did go against the grain of the big band movement by leading small combos and playing mostly old tunes (he had led a big band earlier—the music in his 1935 Vitaphone short "Red Nichols & His World Famous Pennies" is bland). But the new purists looked more to players from New Orleans than to Nichols, and from the 1940s onwards he was pretty much a peripheral figure on the jazz



Cut on June 30, 1944, by the Red Nichols Trio for Steiner-Davis Records at 513 W. Aldine Street, Chicago, Illinois. From the collection of V78J's editor. No record labels are shown in the Nichols bio-discography but 12 photographs are included.



scene. Consider that on June 28, 1945, he cut for Capitol "When You Wish Upon A Star" from Disney's *Pinocchio*. Why this? In mid-1945, Bunk Johnson's Band—sometimes called Bunk Johnson and His Street Paraders, or Bunk's Brass Band—was making superb records, demonstrating for jazz lovers that musicians could play in an old style and still make a vital contribution to the art.

Nichols continued to delight his audience but may have worried too much about pleasing supper club patrons. In a letter dated January 9, 1992, one of his musicians, trombonist Robbie Robinson, recalls playing in clubs after cutting the LP *Dixieland Supper Club* (Capitol ST 1665): "We had just recorded the tune, 'Always.'...Red said he wanted me to play the tune the same way I had on the recording. Red felt people would purchase the album and expect us to play it as we had on the recording. I had to learn what I did on the recording and play it the same way, always."

Actually, Nichols was never famous as an improviser. In the Benny Goodman biography *Swing, Swing, Swing* (Norton, 1993), author Ross Firestone cites the contention of Jimmy McPartland that Nichols even in early days planned out solos before going into recording studios. Nonetheless,

it is surprising, even sad, that Nichols discouraged improvising among musicians working under him.

I have the LP *Dixieland Supper Club*, which was cut on February 9, 1961—in stereo! Performances are spirited. The work of bass saxophonist Joe Rushton is impressive, especially on the LP's closing number, "Moonlight Bay" (this track is overlooked in the bio-discography). But Nichols had declined as a jazz artist. I wish he had worked harder to preserve on vinyl—and in stereo—jazz as it had been played in the 1920s. Instead, here we have jazz played mostly as audiences in supper clubs of the 1960s thought jazz had been played in the 1920s. There is a difference.

The four authors, in compiling so many rich details in 743 pages, obviously view the second half of Nichols' career as significant. They do not actually say it. One of them, Stephen Hester, uses mild adjectives in his Preface: "He was a celebrated cornetist while still in his teens during the 1920s and remained an active, respected musician until his death on June 28, 1965." At least Hester avoids the hyperbole of Backensto, who states in the Foreword, "Much research has convinced me that the influence and contributions of Red Nichols were major and surpassed by none." This is hardly credible. The influence and contributions of Louis Armstrong—to mention only one musician of that generation—clearly surpassed Nichols'.

The authors do not say why they document the second half of Nichols' career instead of the more impressive first half, but I presume that a wealth of information about the late period was already on hand. Will a companion book covering early years be compiled? They do not say. I know that Phil and Linda Evans have devoted energy recently to a book on another jazz figure. The postpaid price for their other new book—*Bix, The Leon Bix Beiderbecke Story*—is \$50.50. For a copy of this, write to Phil Evans, P.O. Box 10507, Bakersfield, CA 93389-0507.

***The Red Nichols Story—After Intermission, 1942-1965* may be ordered from Scarecrow Press, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, Maryland 20706.**

NEW CD BOX SET: Anthology of American Folk Music

Compiled By Harry Smith

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings SFW 40090 (6 CDs)

Reviewed by Frank Young

Compilations of vintage American blues and country music are plentiful today. Thanks to Yazoo, Memphis Archives, Document Records, and other labels, the recorded music of the Depression era including ethnic music is well within the reach of willing listeners. Many collections owe a debt to the pioneering work of Harry Smith. His six-record set, *Anthology of American Folk Music*, has been lovingly and elaborately brought into the digital era. Though much of its content may seem familiar, Smith's aggregation is still hard to beat, some 45 years after its first appearance.

The re-issuing of this set is well timed. Younger listeners and musicians are rediscovering and performing this so-called "folk" material anew, along with hillbilly music of the 1940s and 1950s. These "alt.country" enthusiasts are repeating a trend caused by the *Anthology's* original issue. Many of these tunes became standards for folk-pop performers, such as the Kingston Trio, and "purist" musicians, such as Joan Baez. Through the efforts of these performers, this music became known to teenagers and college students, often in watered-down, ersatz versions. Although few of these young fans would have enjoyed the original 1920s and 1930s recordings, the *Anthology* deserves credit for helping to revive these tunes.

Though it has not topped the charts, the *Anthology* seems to be one of the more high-profile box sets of the last year. It has been widely reviewed. Its maroon-and-gold box has been a constant sight in the homes of many of my own friends and acquaintances.

In the thick booklet of essays that accompanies this set, Harry Smith is celebrated as a pioneer, a scoundrel, an outlaw, and a preservationist without compare. With the help of Folkways owner Moses Asch, Smith was also a marketer ex-

traordinaire. As John Atkins notes in his Carter Family essay included in *Stars of Country Music* (University of Illinois Press, 1975), "Since Folkways, as the name implies, was the major label producing ethnic music, they were able to package and sell this collection of basically blues and country music as 'folk.' Had it been labelled 'hillbilly' or 'blues,' then I am sure it would never have gained the critical appreciation such a collection richly deserves."

As a teen, Smith did some field-recording, documenting the tribal dances of the Northwestern Nootka, Kwakiutl and Lummi Indian tribes. But he didn't lug equipment into the woods to create this set. He chose from his and other collections of 78 RPM discs, a blend of what he felt were outstanding pieces of commercially recorded American country, blues and ethnic music. The selections were grouped by lyrical themes or performance styles, and further adorned by Smith's eccentric, fact-packed booklet/guide to the series. This booklet, reproduced in its entirety for the CD package, amounts to the first real attempt to provide any historical guideline to these Depression-era recordings.

The booklet contains stories of Smith's devoted search for old records during World War II, which reminds me that a Seattle newspaper, *The Stranger*, once printed a comic strip by Canadian artist David Collier about Smith, and I wish it had been duplicated in the booklet. It begins with Smith walking through downtown Seattle during the war years. He suddenly hears the sounds of an old-time string band recording waft up from a basement. Intrigued, Smith descends into the room to find a cheerful worker surrounded by a mountain of forgotten shellac. The worker explains that the records have been gathered as wartime scrap and that he is playing them one last time before they



are destroyed. The Smith of the comic strip had never encountered this music before and is inspired to rescue these forgotten sounds.

This cartooned "origin story" of Smith's archival fever may be apocryphal, but Smith was a pioneer in his own way by obsessively collecting and protecting recorded performances that were in danger of vanishing. The harsh, unpolished sounds of 1929-era string bands had long since been replaced by the smoothness of Ernest Tubb and Red Foley. The popularity of amplified electric guitars had made antique the acoustic stylings of a Roy Harvey or a Dick Justice. With no modern audience for the older music, there was no reason, it seemed at the time, to keep it around.

Luis Kemnitzer, in an essay from the set, reminisces about Harry's greed for 78s: "Harry would wheedle a record out of [a collector]. He 'just wanted to borrow it for a few days.'...The mark would hand over the record, knowing that he would never see it again...I had the impression that [Smith] considered himself more the custodian than the owner of these records...he would lend out books that he thought you might want, gave away paintings and collages, but once a record came into his room it never left...he would never let me borrow them, even as he would borrow or try to

borrow records from other people."

Smith may have been a pariah to some collector-friends, but without his fiercely acquisitive and protective nature, his *Anthology* might not have existed nor would its performances be as accessible and well-known.

Originally, the *Anthology* consisted of three LPs, with each of the six LP sides tailored to a specific theme, a maximum of seven selections per side. The CD version does not tamper with Smith's formula. It is true that the music could have been crammed onto three compact discs. Instead, the music is leisurely spread over six. In that sense the CD set is faithful to the original LP package. This format may make it easier for new listeners to acclimate themselves to this music.

His sequencing is essential to the set's effect. The two-disc set of "Ballads," for example, masterfully weaves different versions of classic narratives with 18th- and 19th- century murder ballads, creating a rich tapestry of lyrical material. Unusual items—"Peg and Awl" by the Carolina Tar Heels, "Down On Penny's Farm" by the Bentley Boys—complement the well-known likes of "John Hardy" and "Kassie [sic] Jones."

Seasoned listeners may be dismayed by the high percentage of familiar material. Of the 84 pieces on this set, at least 45 have been re-re-issued on other CD collections. This is not Smith's fault. His choices, in fact, are superb. There's never a dull moment throughout the set. It is a bit galling that so many other anthologists have exhumed material from the *Anthology*, especially when many choice performances from the same rich period have never been re-issued or remain in the vaults..

Smith's original booklet for the *Anthology* is perhaps the set's jewel. Reproduced in a magazine-size facsimile, it showcases Smith's exhaustive documentation, artistic sensibility, and droll sense of humor. Imaginative collages on the orange-inked covers use 19th century engravings for a comic effect that anticipates Terry Gilliam's animations for the Month Python comedy group.

This blend of history and absurdity continues



throughout the booklet. Smith pokes gentle fun at his beloved material, as if to warn America's future folkniks not to take this music too seriously. (This tactic didn't work.) Many chuckles abound in Smith's tabloid-headline summaries of American folk ballads. "Willie Moore," recorded by Burnett and Rutherford, is reduced to this: ANNIE UNDER GRASSY MOUND AFTER PARENTS NIX MARRIAGE TO KING. DEATH PROBABLY SELF-INFLICTED.

Religious pieces get a similar irreverent treatment. Smith's freeze-dried versions of other lyrics read like someone's drug-addled poetry. His rendering of J.P. Nestor's "Train on the Island" is par for the course: TRAIN ON ISLAND, SINCE (THOUGHT) HEARD IT SQUEAL (BLOW), GO TELL TRUE LOVE CAN'T ROLL WHEEL, HAPPY DO FEEL [THINKING (LONG AS) I CAN GO].

If any of this impudence casts a doubt on Smith's intentions, look no further than the exhaustive index and bibliography, or to the constant allusions, in each song's write-up, to similar-themed lyrics and to other artists' versions of the same pieces. This booklet was a labor of love and is lavished with photographs of the performers, culled from vintage record catalogs, old sleeves, and a plethora of clever clip-art decor. The booklet is a fascinating work of art by itself.

In conjunction with the music, it offers a healthy dose of high-jinks to the listener.

Smith's playfulness flavored his other works—paintings, experimental films and sound-collages. Samples of Smith's works can be seen and heard on the enhanced sixth CD, which is playable on any CD-ROM drive. Aside from Smith's own artistic efforts, there are fascinating excerpts from interviews with legendary bluesmen, taken from 1950s Folkways LPs, and video footage of Smith receiving a special Grammy award. And any home with felines will get a vivid reaction when the audio track "Cat-Cophony" is played!

To rhapsodize over the *Anthology's* contents at length would be redundant since the CD booklet itself praises the tunes. Whether approached by jaded listeners who know the set in its original form, or by novices to the (folk)ways of old-time music, this is a thoughtful and playfully programmed piece of work. The twin CDs of Volume Two are my favorites, filled with gems like "Indian War Whoop" by Hoyt Ming and his Pep-Steppers, "Old Dog Blue" by Jim Jackson and "La Danseuse" by Delma Lachney and Blind Uncle Gaspard, plus striking religious material.

I searched for original LPs so I could better assess Pete Reiniger's transferring of Smith's analog tapes to compact disc, but I could find no copies in the Seattle area! The CD set's sound quality is solid, with well-balanced, warm transfers. Aside from the rasp and sigh of the shellac (no obstacle to experienced listeners), these are clean and crisp-sounding transfers. Mostly absent on pieces transferred from Victor discs is the mechanical whining sound common to other re-issues, such as Rounder's series of the Carter Family's Victor records. A few muddy pieces remain, but Smith seems to have taken good care of his 78s.

Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music* is as relevant now as it was in 1952. Its combination of scholarship and whimsy is wonderful, and the power of the music speaks for itself. If this re-issued set brings these classic pieces of Americana back into popular circulation, then all the better.

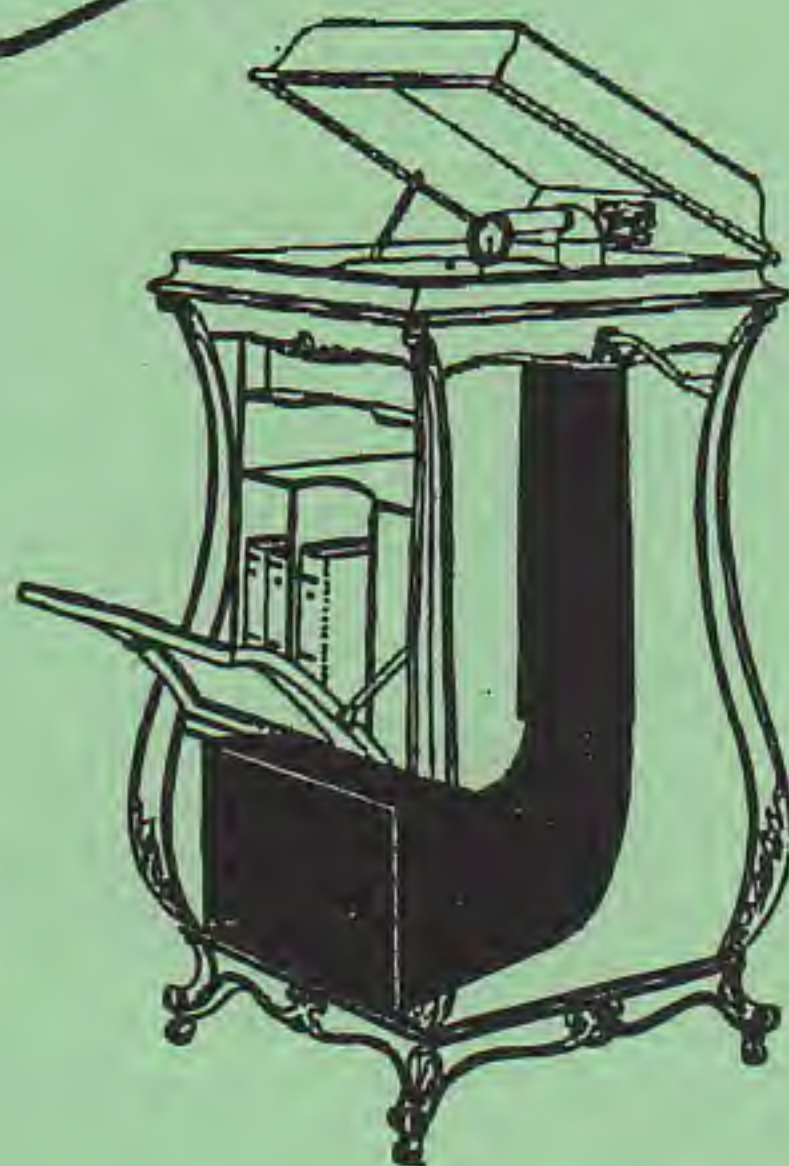
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(Left) The bulge-sided Puritan was also marketed under private and department store brands, including J.L. Hudson (Detroit). It was a rather anemic-sounding machine despite its massive proportions. (*Talking Machine World*, December 15, 1919)

(Below) BD&M's version of Puritan was advertised heavily in 1922. (*Talking Machine World*, June 15, 1922)

Puritan Records

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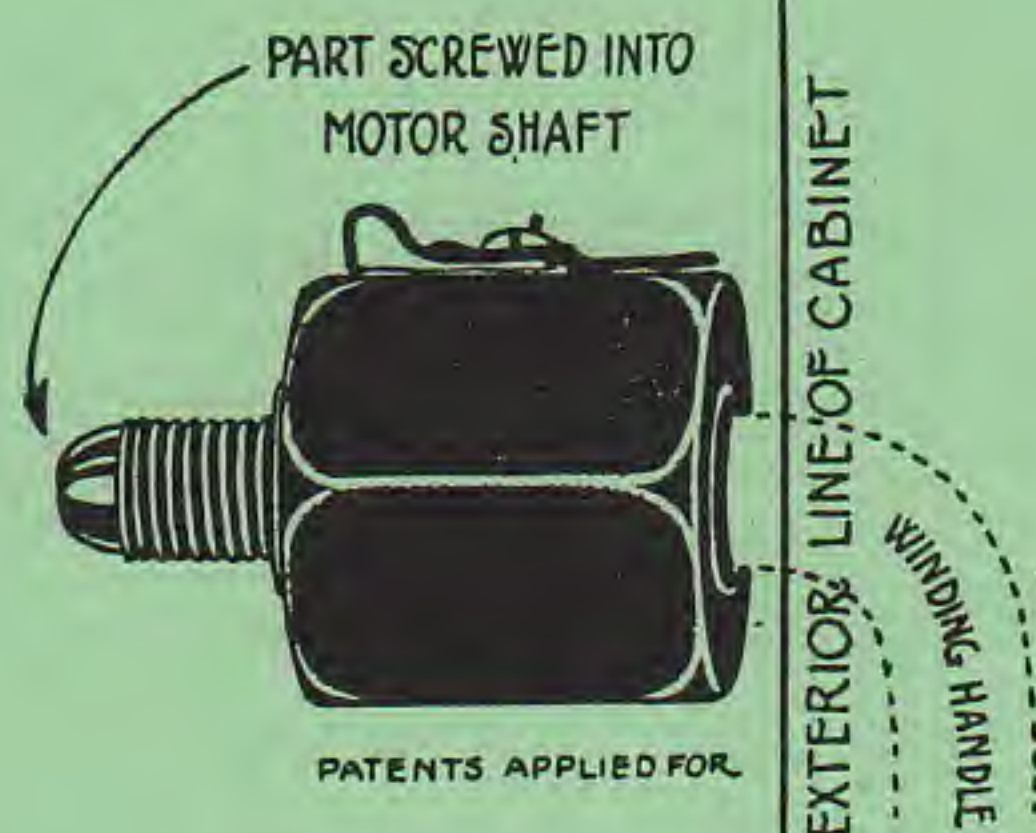
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